

DEDICATED TO THE IDEAL GOD

NARAYANA

THE VEDIC INTERPRETERS

AND

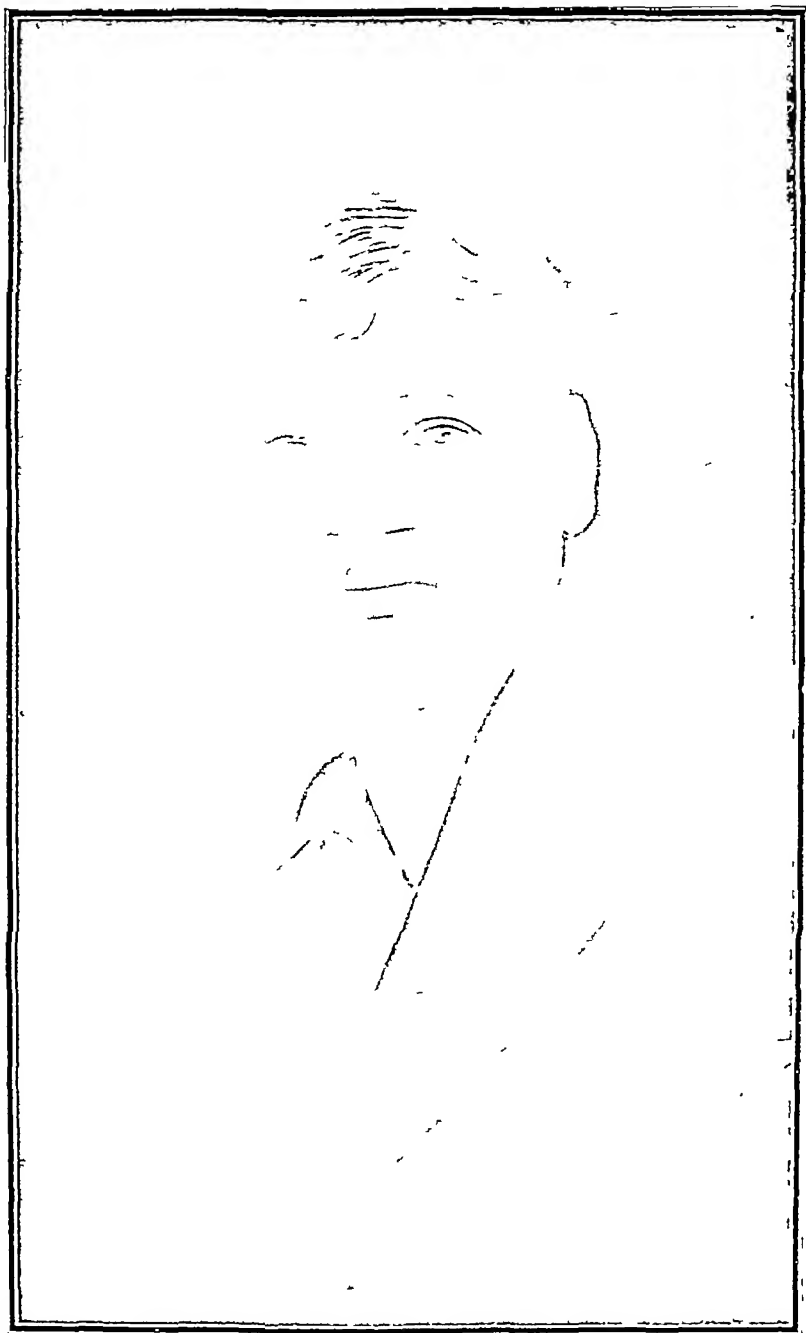
THE IDEAL EPIC AVATARS

SRI RAMA CHANDRA

AND

SRI KRISHNA





THE AUTHOR

PREFACE.

The world takes a great interest in the themes of the Indian Epics and the learned men of Europe have criticised them in their works. It is only natural that in Indians these vile and unjustifiable calumnies against certain venerable and noble characters of their Epics give rise to great pain. It is, therefore, the sacred duty of an Indian to disabuse the minds of students of the Indian Epics of many current erroneous notions. It must be said that by Western education Indian students have become unable to comprehend their own ancient forefathers, with the result that in almost all cases they have lost all power of initiative and have learnt only to re-echo Western views and findings.

It is impossible for anyone to pose as an expounder or discoverer of the truths and mysteries mixed up in the Epics without first discussing briefly all the important questions of ancient Indian civilisation and history, as well as of worship, in all their bearings on the Epics, especially when one is fully aware of the great difficulties arising from the controversial nature of some of the issues, which have raised considerable doubt in the minds of well known Western scholars like Professor Max Muller and others. The task is almost superhuman, for one has first to discover and sift all the materials and facts which have any bearing on these subjects. A standard and a starting point are necessary for every measurement and appraisal. It is only fair and right, in the circumstances, that I should place before my readers what I have learnt from the revelations made by the texts of the Epics themselves and the light I have derived by touching the negative and positive switches on the vast switchboard of the Hindu Sanskrit literature of Philosophy, Purana and Law, as well as the different sections of the Epics, growing with the progress of time.

Human knowledge is limited, and the method of acquiring it is found in human nature. A child is not ashamed to ask questions about things he does not know, and he repeats what he learns before he masters it. One cannot swim unless one goes beyond one's depth. The study of the Indian Epics in all their details means a lifelong task. The results of my study were placed before the learned Societies of India who are authorities on the subject. I contributed articles on the subject and visited Benares, Poona, etc., to present my conclusions on the various knotty points of the Epics. These secured

its front elevation as seen by a spectator or bystander. This may be averred with equal truth of the Epic structure. It is well-known that there cannot be any close resemblance between the East and the West.

In ancient India religious education with theology and philosophy was highly developed. The Hindus owe their existence to the great ideals of morality, love, religion and spiritual excellence depicted in the Epics, but to others they convey very little information or inspiration. An illiterate Hindu even now understands and realises the connotation of truth, justice, piety and love by the name of Yudhishthira, filial piety and ideal kingship by that of Ramchandra, fidelity by that of Sita, love by that of Draupadi, chastity by that of Sāvitri, parental love by that of Dasaratha, fraternal love by that of Bharata or Lakshmana, chivalry by that of Arjuna, tyranny by that of Ravana and villainy by that of Duryodhana.

It must be understood that whoever allows himself to be carried away by imagination or tries to put hosts of syllogisms to flight with a sneer is unable to grapple with facts from the internal evidence in the Epics themselves. Besides, one cannot confine oneself simply to the Epics themselves in re-valuing them, for the simple reason that they were meant for learned assemblies like the Cūṭhara University of Sounaka or the royal sacrifices of ancient Kings of India. They were the manuals in popular garb, containing, as they do, the teachings of the Vedas and their religious sacrifices with theories and practices for the better and clearer understanding of the different subjects.

By resorting to all the material which has any bearing on the subject I have tried to gather light on this difficult subject and now endeavour to assist the students of the Epics to do likewise, and to spare them the tedious task of remembering and referring to all that literature themselves, I have put in brief resumes and sketches of all that material in this book. It appeared to me as a revelation of the mysteries of the Epics, and may appear as a re-valuation of the Epics to my readers.

Knowledge, unlike food, is not destroyed when it is made accessible to all and is thoroughly examined and developed with an exchange of views by learned people, a course which all sensible men welcome. This is the long and short of this undertaking. It is presented to the learned body of the world and, conscious as I am of my shortcomings in a task like this, I trust will be appreciated by them. Getting to grips with things as they really were from the early days of ancient civilisation up to the last days of Epic growth, has been no easy task. Theories of liberty and fraternity tried to keep dignity within proper bounds and

—and against absolute despotism. Everything seemed to have been decided at the general assembly of religious sacrifices like Rajasuya and Ashvamedha. The instinct of self-assertion is inherent in human nature, but the whole mind of India has been coloured with legalism from the days of King Vena. Autocracy was not tolerated. King Vena paid the penalty of being an autocrat. The caste-system made an admirable judiciary nursery for putting a stop to undue interference in the functions of a Brahmin and a Kshatriya by ambitious men like Parasurama and Vrikasura.

The doctrine of Karma, or the will of God, or Faith, has very little to do with the early Indian Epics. Such a doctrine is the growth of science, not of culture. Such a doctrine does not reflect the everyday life of ancient India. The ideas of self-improvement, self-recession and self-extermination were identified with the Yoga system of Philosophy. There had been a gradual process of attainment in a series of lives and deaths, which the ancient law-givers could not realise. The Mahabharata depicts that the national honour of a nation or its religious institutions should be preserved on the battlefield by great kings, who were loved and deified. Eventually this was sought to be done by incarnation of god being invoked in a sacrificial fire. Here one is often struck by a curious sort of unreality—the object to be attained had been the goal of the process of attainment. This made the task of distinguishing truth from the fiction in Epic literature all the more difficult. The Mahabharata illustrates the characteristic traits of the early Aryan civilisation in India, on which the different stages of Hinduism have been developed in all their phases.

It is the effort to better understand the lifelong labour of a great poet that has been presented to the cultured world in the form of this book.

Promatha Nath Mullaik
Calcutta

Promatha Nath Mullaik

INTRODUCTION.

Hinduism has marched through the ages, almost unaffected by external onslaughts, and the nations of the world have evinced interest in the history of its growth, expansion, decadence and revival. Science gives trained heads to unearth the past, but a new heart with a new spirit is an even greater necessity. Nothing escapes the prodding touch of modern research, and clever men think that all the mysteries of the universe lie naked before their eyes. The stories in books of religion are thought of as nothing but fairy tales or allegories, and God as but the spirit of humanity. God is forgotten in an age where doubt and scepticism is the order of the day. Everyone assumes that his success in life is due to his own energy, perseverance, ability, shrewdness or good luck. On the battlefield, in courts of law and in gambling booths people ascribe results to Satan or to God. Beyond this the majority of the people find no positive proof of the real existence of God in Heaven or the divine law and nothing to fear in the day of judgment. There are now more lovers of pleasure than of God. Character is no longer the test of fellowship. Men are devoting all their energies to becoming splendid players and sportsmen, but how few care to look into His face who, as the creator and author of science, philosophy and everything, alone can solve the great questions of the day. Hope springs eternal.

The increasing facilities for intercommunication between various nations and the opportunities of studying one another's languages and religions have led to an ever increasing appreciation of the ancient civilisation of India and its literature, culture and religion. The more they pry into and study the ancient civilization and culture of India the more they are struck by the gigantic dimensions, excellence and the abiding and enduring character of Hindu Sanskrit Literature. Everything in India has been on a colossal scale—its mountains, its rivers, its wealth—both spiritual and material—and its literature—Veda, Vedanta, Upanishad, Epics, Dramas, etc. They breathe the social, religious and cultural development of ages. Many Western savants have approached the study of Indian literature and religious books from a western point of view, and they have been followed by Indian scholars, adoring them but without having the courage to see for themselves if the former were right or wrong. Almost all the ancient religions of the world yielded or succumbed to extraneous onslaughts, but Hinduism has stood like a

remained amidst the buffets and storms of invading hordes from time immemorial. Conquering hordes have come and gone, foreign religions have been tried. Hindu religion and its temples have been persecuted and desecrated, other religions have been sought to be imposed upon it, but it is a marvel that the Hindu religion has proudly reared its head and stood its ground very nearly in the same form from those ages when it first rose into the dim twilight of oblivion and mythical legend down to the present day.

The earlier structure of Hindu Society and religion rests on the Vedas. But the Veda was a sealed book to the common people both on account of its inaccessibleness to the latter as well as its extreme condensation and unintelligibility. As time wore on, from one Veda four Vedas grew up. Its various interpretations assumed the name of the fifth Veda, for the common and unlearned people, as the *Bharata Samhita*, which afterwards developed into the great Indian Epics, the *Mahabharata* and the *Ramayana*. The Vedas and the great Indian Epics form the foundation stone on which the whole fabric of Hindu religion and culture rest and have rested, unaffected by the thousand external influences and misfortunes of foreign domination to which any other religion and world would have succumbed. It is the innate truth and inner meaning of the philosophy and tenets of the Hindu religion that has preserved it in its pristine glory from the ravages of time and misfortune.

which it is reduced by reason of ages of subjugation. Scientific scrutiny is fast becoming a fine art and men indulge freely in a war of tongue and pen. Man without culture and education is worse than a beast. A beast cannot invent mischief like a man. The tongue has no bones, yet it is stronger than iron. It is a sword that some never let rest. God has fenced it in with two rows of teeth and lips. A wicked tongue kills three—he who tells a lie, he about whom it is told, and he to whom it is told. But where the heart is humble, the tongue is charitable. Most of man's sins are in his words. Education and association teach men how to place a check on their tongues. It is for this reason that some people observe silence for a certain period as a disciplinary measure and it is included as a part of the Yoga system of philosophy.

The ancient people had not the facilities of writing and printing. There was a time when men connected with religious and philanthropic works alone were highly respected and their names, illustrating charity or some abstruse principle of religion, were alone thought worthy of mention in the history culled from ancient oral traditions and legends. Places connected with great events of the past became famous and commemorative of the incidents and in a way served the purpose of history. If it was connected with any religious ceremonies, as the birthplace of any great man or as the place of emancipation of any great soul, it became sacred. Some find God associated with past events or with the awe-inspiring temples or monasteries. To defend their Holy place thousands of crusaders fought for years and even laid down their lives for religious merit.

A historian takes the utmost trouble to ascertain facts before embodying them in his book. In respect of a certain period he depicts the country and those citizens who are necessary for his theme. Great philosophers, scientists, politicians, who become eminent afterwards, are not mentioned if they are not connected with his theme. For this he should not be discarded as unauthentic. For instance, if he is writing the history of poets and dramatists, he cannot be concerned with the public men of the day in civil and military affairs and *vice-versa*. There are men who from ulterior motives employ all their energies and learning to discredit the life and works of a distinguished man who has worked to solve the difficult questions of religion and philosophy, and thereby attempt to upset the ingrained belief of the people.

As to the authorship of the Bharata Samhita, it is quite immaterial whether it is the work of one man or twenty different men—it is certain that the one man who edited it and published it was distinguished by a name. His admirers, it is only natural, will give him a miraculous birth and his detractors, on the contrary, will ascribe a low birth to him.

It is the way of the world that the worth and antecedents of great men are sought to be lowered by their detractors. The author of the Bharata Samhita was the off-spring of Narayana himself, the Creator of the Universe. The followers of Rudra (Mahadeva) ascribe the birth of the author of the Mahabharata to that great God's boon, and their adherents declare that he was the fruit of forbidden love between the virgin fisher-girl Gandhabati and the sage Parasara, when the latter was ferrying a boat on the river. In this way the detractors calumniate both the father and his great son, the greatest law-givers and sage of their time.

Cleanliness has become a substitute for godliness. Men and women have become more interested in fashions, entertainments and pleasures than in the solemn duties of society and religion to which they owe a duty for the sake of their culture, if not for their birth in the illustrious Arya Race. Narayana was the name of a Vedic sage as also of the God who presided over Vedic Gods and from whom the Hindu trinity originated. Orthodox Hindus love the great religious book, the Bharata Samhita, for its honourable record of glorious events, for its past memories and associations, but it has been merged in the Mahabharata and has not been recovered.

All religious books of the nations of the world are said to have emanated from God himself and to have been revealed to his beloved people and worshippers possibly to inspire implicit confidence and faith in the mind of the general public in the matters spoken of in the books of religion by the ancients seers. Hindus accept the Bharata Samhita as the revealed utterances of the Supreme God Narayana to the celestial Minister Narada and believe that the world was created

God Narayana himself to go forth with the active principle of the creation, the five elements—Earth, Water, Fire, Wind and Ether—into the present state of the five senses of animal life. The Vedas are said to have been revealed by the great Narayana. Those who had seen him by God Himself communicated their knowledge to others, and he was duly honoured by father to son through successive generations of tradition. The preparation of the written record began about 3000 B.C. and the revelation was given in a bodily form in an inspired book called the Bharata Samhita, for which the great Indian sage is responsible.

The Bharata Samhita is said to have been revealed to Narayana himself and from him to the celestial Minister Narada, who is said to have been the first to reveal it to the world. The Bharata Samhita is said to have been revealed to the world by Narayana himself and from him to the celestial Minister Narada, who is said to have been the first to reveal it to the world.

same source, the Bharata Samhita, by persons differing widely in rank and occupation and in mental and spiritual endowments. The truth is brought out in its varied aspects as presented through different individuals. It is only natural, then, that the Mahabharata appears to the superficial, careless or prejudiced student as a heterogeneous mass of discrepancy or contradiction with a clear contrast in style and diversity in the nature of the subjects and their treatment; but to a careful student with a clearer insight and knowledge of the subjects dealt with therein it will not be so. The Bharata Samhita must first be differentiated from the Mahabharata and the Ramayana.

The Bible underwent many revisions, and it is only natural that the same also took place with the Indian Epics. God's clock of prophecy is never too fast nor too slow. A remarkable prediction of the Machine Age was made by Daniel, as recorded in the last Chapter of the Bible, 'Prophecies.' The men of ancient Egypt, Rome and Greece were high in their standards of culture and art, but India was the pioneer in all these and, what is more, it was she who first taught Philosophy, Astronomy, and Astrology to the world. The Hindu Epics describe the Machine Age in the aeroplanes of Nala and Meghnada, radio and the wireless in the description of celestial domains demonstrated by Narada in his vivid description in the Epic, but half a century ago no one thought them possible even though people now daily enjoy them.

The controversy between truth and falsehood has existed from the very earliest times. In the Vedic Age men wandered in the woods and mountain fastnesses in search of what they desired. The trees, boughs and caves offered them shelter and protection, the flowing water appeased their thirst, cooled and cleansed their bodies, the fruits and vegetables maintained them with food, the sky above with its luminous bodies, the sun and the moon, shed different lights at day and at night for their work and rest, while the wind and the earth refreshed their lives with sleep. All these made them adore bounteous Nature, whom they at first worshipped.

Storm, thunder and lightning, fire, earthquake, flood and volcanic eruption made them first realise the powerful and fearful weapons of Nature. They had seen the boundless immensity of Nature in the ocean below and the sky above. Their instinctive human frailty and limitations naturally made them tremble with awe. They gladly offered whatever was dear and valuable in order to save themselves from destruction by the wrath of Nature.

Nature, which proved to them so bounteous and whom they worshipped by offering prayers, ceased to occupy the same place in their

heart of hearts, when they found Nature playing the part of a veritable engine of destruction. They wanted to worship someone who would correct and control that Nature, prevent it becoming unkind to them and make it continue to be bounteous. Thus the idea of God, or the existence of the One Supreme and Omnipotent, is connected with the creation and destruction of the Universe, and all religious books begin with descriptions of them. The idea of God was thus evolved out of love and fear. Indra, the King of Heaven, thus became the greatest of all Vedic Gods as the wielder of thunder and giver of rain. They began to dream of Heaven and Hell in their hard struggles of life and death. God seemed to them to be in possession of the Heaven above, where everything was enjoyable, contrary to what they had been experiencing in a Hell of misery.

The Veda records this origin of worship and sacrifice, the first form of religion with the masses, when religion through the path of knowledge was with the select few. These seers, who were men capable of traversing the region of mind through devotion and concentration, were thus distinguished from other people as being created by the fiat of the divine God brahma. In Vedic sacrifices the Brahma (i.e. a man officiating as brahma) was in charge of the essential part of the ceremony, the spirit of sacrifice, while the others were the actual performers.

The institution of Vedic sacrifices was very popular and from them the people were made to realise the system of creation and its essential relation with the brahma of the sacrifice as the essential centre of creation from whom the votaries drew their inspiration. In a sacrifice the brahma was not the actual performer but the superintendent over the actual performers, who felt assured that whatever would be wanting would be provided for by the Brahma. The idea of God thus came to be a matter of faith and confidence for the ultimate success and deliverance of the world's every sufferer.

creation and destruction. People began to think of one under whose obligation the sun, the moon and the stars rose and disappeared and for what purpose they were created, what caused their relations with the earth, the oceans, the wind and fire. This became the centre of their thought and meditation, till they found that there was a supreme God presiding over the creation of the animate and the inanimate world. They had worshipped thirty-three Gods who were but the different parts of the one great machinery of creation. It was the great builder God who conceived the creation and made each part do its definite work as a matter of obligation in relation to others, not dependant to any one except to their maker, who wound the machine and changed, replaced or repaired the main-spring and through whose skill and device the main machine moved or stopped, lived or decayed.

They found out the mistake of worshipping so many gods and began to realise the conception of one God, the master mind of the Universe. This has been the decentralisation of human service to the creator, the Almighty Father of the Universe. This has been the central pivot of the service to humanity in which the idea of finding the divinity in one's own self has been materialised, thus making a cultured man sacrifice anything, however dear and precious, for the service of humanity and for the good of the world. It has certainly been a great spur to effect the transformation of mind and soul and consolidate them under one banner with one creed of the divine conception of Narayana, the union of Atma and Paramatma, the great being under the name of Mahaparusha, the creator of the whole Universe. The Bharata Samhita made human beings think of the author who was instrumental in all creation. The question of creation and its author became the all important theme over Nature and its creator, or its presiding deities.

The Bharata Samhita records how the Vedic gods, Indra, Agni, Varuna, Rudra and Brahma accepted the divine Narayana as their Creator and Lord. The Brahmanas owed their origin to Brahma, the source of Vedic knowledge, truth and wisdom, who invoked the deities to fight the Asuras, who had usurped the rights and possessions of kings and their priests. How the Vedic seers, Vasistha, Vrihaspati, Agastya and Bhrigu encouraged the Devas to fight their powerful adversaries, the Asuras, by offering oblations to the divine Narayana to ensure success and glory, is recited in the Bharata Samhita. It relates how the Daksa Yajna ultimately culminated in the fight between the Devas, headed by the Hindu trinity, Brahma, Vishnu and Rudra, under the Generalship of Indra, and led to the sacrifice of Dadhichi, persecution of Bhrigu and disappearance of Agastya.

heart of hearts, when they found Nature playing the part of a veritable engine of destruction. They wanted to worship someone who would correct and control that Nature, prevent it becoming unkind to them and make it continue to be bounteous. Thus the idea of God, or the existence of the One Supreme and Omnipotent, is connected with the creation and destruction of the Universe, and all religious books begin with descriptions of them. The idea of God was thus evolved out of love and fear. Indra, the King of Heaven, thus became the greatest of all Vedic Gods as the wielder of thunder and giver of rain. They began to dream of Heaven and Hell in their hard struggles of life and death. God seemed to them to be in possession of the Heaven above, where everything was enjoyable, contrary to what they had been experiencing in a Hell of misery.

The Veda records this origin of worship and sacrifice, the first form of religion with the masses, when religion through the path of knowledge was with the select few. These seers, who were men capable of traversing the region of mind through devotion and concentration, were thus distinguished from other people as being created by the fiat of the divine God brahma. In Vedic sacrifices the Brahma (*i.e.* a man officiating as Brahma) was in charge of the essential part of the ceremony, the spirit of sacrifice, while the others were the actual performers. The institution of Vedic sacrifices was very popular and from them the people were made to realise the system of creation and its essential religion with the Brahma of the sacrifice as the essential centre of creation from whom the workers drew their inspiration. In a sacrifice the Brahma was not the actual performer but the superintendent over the actual performers, who felt assured that whatever would be wanting would be provided for by the Brahma. The idea of God thus came to be a haven of faith and confidence for the ultimate success and deliverance of the world's weary wayfarers.

There were days in which the majority of the people lived from hand to mouth. They sought for what could provide them with food and drink just to prevent their immediate death and destruction. They were struck with the examples of the lives of the fortunate few, the favourite sons of the Creator, who offered all valuable possessions of the earth to the Omnipotent Creator to make them immune from ruin and disaster, and they were only too glad to follow their example in the best way they could.

The sun, the moon, the wielder of thunder, the master of oceans, the maker of storms, the creator of fire or the holder of the earth no longer seemed to be the presiding deities of life, the soul or energy of

creation and destruction. People began to think of one under whose obligation the sun, the moon and the stars rose and disappeared and for what purpose they were created, what caused their relations with the earth, the oceans, the wind and fire. This became the centre of their thought and meditation, till they found that there was a supreme God presiding over the creation of the animate and the inanimate world. They had worshipped thirty-three Gods who were but the different parts of the one great machinery of creation. It was the great builder God who conceived the creation and made each part do its definite work as a matter of obligation in relation to others, not dependant to any one except to their maker, who wound the machine and changed, replaced or repaired the main-spring and through whose skill and device the main machine moved or stopped, lived or decayed.

They found out the mistake of worshipping so many gods and began to realise the conception of one God, the master mind of the Universe. This has been the decentralisation of human service to the creator, the Almighty Father of the Universe. This has been the central pivot of the service to humanity in which the idea of finding the divinity in one's own self has been materialised, thus making a cultured man sacrifice anything, however dear and precious, for the service of humanity and for the good of the world. It has certainly been a great spur to effect the transformation of mind and soul and consolidate them under one banner with one creed of the divine conception of Narayana, the union of Atma and Paramatma, the great being under the name of Mahaparusha, the creator of the whole Universe. The Bharata Samhita made human beings think of the author who was instrumental in all creation. The question of creation and its author became the all important theme over Nature and its creator, or its presiding deities.

The Bharata Samhita records how the Vedic gods, Indra, Agni, Varuna, Rudra and Brahma accepted the divine Narayana as their Creator and Lord. The Brahmanas owed their origin to Brahma, the source of Vedic knowledge, truth and wisdom, who invoked the deities to fight the Asuras, who had usurped the rights and possessions of kings and their priests. How the Vedic seers, Vasistha, Vrihaspati, Agastya and Bhrigu encouraged the Devas to fight their powerful adversaries, the Asuras, by offering oblations to the divine Narayana to ensure success and glory, is recited in the Bharata Samhita. It relates how the Daksa Yajna ultimately culminated in the fight between the Devas, headed by the Hindu trinity, Brahma, Vishnu and Rudra, under the Generalship of Indra, and led to the sacrifice of Dadhichi, persecution of Bhrigu and disappearance of Agastya.

the great God whose sound was responsible for his wife's death, but was converted into a follower of Narayana. The Rig Veda affords ample evidence of family kinship and the patriarchal type of family organisation. Angiras, the original ancestor of Vrihaspati and his brothers, established the worship of fire and is deified in the later portions of it.

The worship of ancestors was the very earliest form of worship and was called Pitriyajna and that of the gods of physical nature was called Devayajna. The name of Devayajna offers some just grounds for the reflection that from Yayati the kings were followers of Devayajna and religious kinship began to be more respected than family kinship. Madhavi, daughter of Yayati, was the mother of three lines of kings and wife of the great Viswamitra, one of the renowned Vedic sages who played a conspicuous part in the two Indian Epics. The origin of the word Father is very nearly the same in Sanskrit, Greek and Latin, it means primarily a protector in the languages mentioned Janayitri (Sanskrit), Genitor (Latin) and Generatai (Greek). The son in the family was then subordinate to the father in all respects, but the sons of Devayani, Jadu, Anu, Drahya etc., were not obedient to their father and the mother was jealous of Sarmistha. The great hero of the Mahabharata, Sri Krishna, descended from the line of Jadu, who was disinherited by his father and was distinguished by the sign of the feet of Bhrigu on his breast. The Bharata Samhita deals with Devayajna, Pitriyajna and Dharmayajna and the translation of Yayati to heaven and his fall for his self-glorification, which was arrested not by his devoted son Puru but by his four grandsons, the great respectors of religion or Dharma. Kapila first stood against the sacrifice of animals and preached the true religion of the Veda.

King Mahabhisu was driven out of heaven for staring at the bare body of Ganga (Goddess of the river Ganges) and took birth as Santanu on earth. Pratip, the father of Santanu, who retired to the forest to practise religious austerities, was tried by Ganga but was found too strong to be overcome by passion. Her marriage with Santanu produced children who were sacrificed as soon as they were born. The father Santanu did not say a word when seven children were thus destroyed as agreed upon before the marriage, but when Ganga was about to repeat it on the eighth child King Santanu remonstrated with her and the latter disappeared and flowed as a river. The river Ganges is distinguished as Badhusara by Pratipa, which became the site of a shrine when the great Parasurama was absolved from sin by bathing in it, as referred to in the Paulama and Bana Parvas, but not explained clearly there with all the necessary allusion to the origin of the name of

Badhusara The wives of King Bharata killed their sons when found incompetent and Bharadwaja the product of incestuous connection between Brihaspati and the wife of his brother Utathya, succeeded to the throne, as the King took the son from the woods where he was thrown by the mother Mamata, when Brihaspati refused to take and maintain him

That was a time when moral obligation to religion was considered higher than the social bond and relationship which love and affection inspire. The wealth of the early Aryan people consisted of valiant sons, horses and cattle, without which domestic worship and the integrity and prestige of the family or the king could not be maintained. The raising of a son was a matter of religion as the ancestors would not accept libation at the hands of one who was not of their blood. The Bharata Samhita tried to prove with the words of Narayana that there was very little difference between the Pitriyajna and Devajajna and the offerings go to the great God Narayana. The Aryans dispersed from India continued to worship the sun, etc., the forces of nature and their dead ancestors, in Babylon, Persia, Rome and Greece.

It will not be out of place here to quote the history of Christianity in the way the birth of Karna was sought to be excused in the judgment of men. The name Elagabalus is the Syrian appellation of the sun. The high priest of the Sun, the young Elagabalus, was placed on the throne fallen vacant by the rebellion of the people against their Emperor. For a priest of Sun worship as Roman Emperor the first step was the making of that form of worship the religion of the nation.

‘The new religion did not steal in under the modest demeanour of a stranger, claiming the common rights of hospitality as the national faith of a subject people, it entered with a public pomp as though to supersede and eclipse the ancestral deities of Rome.’

The ancient Indo-Aryan kings distinguished themselves by the performance of sacrifices and all their wealth and energy were spent in educating the people by their own example and employing capable men to propagate truth and religion, reciting the old traditions connected with the sacred places. The Epics describe these, taking their heroes on pilgrimages to these places when they were in exile. This was a subtle way of allaying the distress of the oppressed men with the accounts of the history connected with the ancient sacred places of India. This was the introduction of the poem of idolatry, the giver of light and life in the depressed heart.

The scientific truth behind the Pitriyajna and Devajajna can be traced in the shrines, which are to awaken the forgotten and unfinished

works of their forefathers for the good of humanity. The good moral, spiritual as well as physical influences with which these shrines were connected, acted as living agents to foster their growth and development. The individual is born, not made, and his body and mind are composed of definite unit characters derived from some, but not necessarily all his ancestors, though there might be certain families in which a large proportion of able children are born from generation to generation. Parents are the natural guardians of their children, but they are not necessarily their spiritual guides. True beneficence means something more than the mere supporting of one's children with food, drink and shelter. Parents undoubtedly exert a very powerful influence upon the lives of their children and they in return deeply mourn the passing away of their parents, to which the worship of parents owes its origin.

To give thought, time and personal care were the duties attached to the great teachers of ancient India. Charity begins at home, but real charity helps men to help themselves. This was the education which ancient sages gave to their pupils in the sylvan asylums at the foot of the mountain and on the riverside. Solitude they sought for their devotion and for practising religious austerities, but they believed that faith and happiness die if they are not shared. One cannot pour the perfume of the happiness of one's soul upon others without getting a few drops on oneself. These ancient teachers received voluntary services, as depicted in the Pousya Parva, from their innocent pupils with unparalleled devotion. That was the society they liked best in their solitude, and they relied on the fact that their world had more use for cheerful idiots than a group of melancholy sages. They believed in the question of eternal life on the point of punishment for wickedness or reward for religious life on the earth below. All the religions of the world agree that the cardinal virtues of man alone can withstand the severe struggles of life, which confer on his mind and heart a sort of strength, comfort and relief so assuring and genuine as not to be realised by one sunk in carnal pleasures.

The fragments of Bharata Samhita were incorporated and lost in the two Indian Epics, the Mahabharata and the Ramayana. The Mahabharata has been studied from many points of view; linguistic, historical, geographical and grammatical, and much learning has been brought to bear upon this great subject. But unfortunately very little attempt has been made to trace the growth and development of the legends and themes which have gone to the making of the great Epic, the Mahabharata. That the fabric of the Mahabharata has been

formed out of earlier stratifications is admitted by all, but very little success has hitherto attended the efforts of scholars, either of the East or of the West, to trace the development and growth of the Mahabharata. The beginnings of the Mahabharata are lost in the accretions which have gathered thick and fast round the original nucleus of the Epic. Yet, though the task of an explorer into the dim past of Indian literature is not easy, a careful study of the Mahabharata would show that the task is not an impossible one. The clue to the original nucleus of the Mahabharata is furnished in the Annukramanika Adhyaya of Adi Parva. Anyone who has read the questions of Saunaka and the answers given to him by Sauti, will come to the conclusion that the answers of the narrator of the Mahabharata at the great sacrifice held at Neimisharanya, where great sages from different parts of India had congregated, were not to the point, where they are given in the present version of the Mahabharata, but the real answer is given in Santi Parva (Narayana Colophon). Great scholars, who have made the study of the Mahabharata their life's mission, have by overlooking these points failed to arrive at a correct conclusion as to the real origin of the great Epic.

It must be said that the learned Professor Max Muller, in his famous book "Ancient Sanskrit Literature", first pointed out the importance of the Bharata Samhita, and the work was begun by Professor Lassen, in the following manner

"If it were possible to sift out from the huge mass of Indian Epic poetry, as we now possess it in the Mahabharata and Ramayana those old stories and songs which must have been living for a long time in the mouth of the people before they were collected, enlarged, arranged and dressed up by later hands, a rich mine of information would be opened for the ancient times of India, and very likely also for the Vedic age. But the whole frame of the two Epic poems as they now stand, their language and metre, as well as the moral and religious system they contain, show that they were put together at a period when the world of the Veda was living by tradition only, and, moreover partly misunderstood, and partly forgotten. The war between the Kurus and Pandavas, which forms the principal object of our Mahabharata, is unknown in the Veda. The names of the Kurus and Bharatas are common in the Vedic literature, but the names of Pandavas have never been met with. It has been observed, that even in Panini's grammar the name Pandu or Pandava does not occur, while the Kurus and Bharatas are frequently mentioned particularly in rules treating of the formation of patronymics and similar words. If, then, Avalayana can be shown to have been a contemporary, or at least an immediate successor, of Panini, the Bharata which he is speaking of must have been very different from the Epic poem which is known to us under the name of the Mahabharata, celebrating the war of the Kurus and Pandavas.

"In the form in which we now possess the Mahabharata it shows clear traces that the poets who collected and finished it breathed an intellectual and religious atmosphere very different from that in which the heroes of the poem moved. The Epic character of the story has throughout been changed and almost obliterated by the didactic tendencies of the latest editors, who were clearly Brahmins brought

up in the strict school of the Laws of Manu. But the original traditions of the Pandavas break through now and then, and we can clearly discern that the races among whom the five principal heroes of the Mahabharata were born and fostered were by no means completely under the sway of the Brahmanical Law."

Dr. Hopkins in his book "The Great Epic of India" has found that

'Although we have but two ancient Sanskrit Epics there is no reason to suppose that Epic poetry began with the extant poems in our possession. As was remarked above, the Mahabharata alludes to the 'Great Itihāsas,' which may perhaps imply other poems of Epic character and considerable extent. Nor can it be supposed that Epic poetry was suddenly invented by one poet. The numerous "ancient tales" of Epic character must have furnished a large body of Epic phrase as well as fable, out of which and on the basis of which arose our present Epics' (pp 64-65)

'Illustrative additions are occasionally added not to add weight to the general effect, for the number of cases of actual identity is sufficiently large, but to supply material for fuller treatment of this whole subject eventually. The three hundred examples here registered include also some cases where verbal identity is not quite complete, such as

M iv 19, 29

prabhunnam ivā matangam parikīrnam karenubhīh

G iv 14, 28,

Karenubhir Maharāṇye parikīrṇa yathā drīpāh

and I have not perhaps been thoroughly logical in the admission or exclusion of such cases but in general I have sought to establish an equation not only in the thought but in the expression of it (p 71)

The common tales that remain, apart from this phase of the poems, are few, and such as may be attributed easily to the general stock of legendary tradition

'When we have peeled off the outer layer (and in it are included with one exception, if it be an exception, all the references to Valmiki in the great Epic), we have left two Epics, one of which is a complete whole, the other a congeries of incongruous stories grouped about a central tale both built on the same foundation of phrase and proverb and in part over the same ground of literary allusion, both with heroes of the same type (whose similarity is striking), and both arranged on the same general plan, a court scene, followed by a city scene, where an ally is gained, and then by battle scenes. One of these Epics claims priority, but the claim after all is not that the great poet invented Epic poetry, but that he first wrote an Epic in Sloka verse in a Kāvya or artistic style. As the Ramayana is mainly in Slokas of a more refined style than the Mahabharata and the Kāvya or artistic element is really much more pronounced, and as, further, it is highly probable that Epic poetry was first written in the mixture of rougher Slokas and the tristubha characteristic of the Mahabharata, this claim, so stated, may in general be allowed, without impugning the relatively greater age of the other Epic

"Professor Jacobi admits that the metre of the Ramayana is more refined, but the explanation he gives is that it was a product of that East where poetic art was first developed. In a subsequent chapter I shall show that those parts of the great Epic which from a metrical point of view agree most closely with the Ramayana, are the later parts (p 79 Hopkins, "The Great Epic of India")

"Allusions to Vedic literature, Veda, Chandas, Mantra, Sruti, are naturally common in every part of the Mahabharata, but except in the didactic or later Epic these are usually of a general character. It may be assumed that the bulk of Sruti or revealed works, if not all of it, was composed before the Epic began. Nevertheless, it is interesting to see which portions of this hereditary literature are especially mentioned and particularly important to observe how the Epic cites from older works" (Hopkins p 2).

"The Epic even has Caturveda as an epithet of a man, — 'one that knows the four Vedas' (— Caturvidya), — as earlier triveda, travidya, is used in the same way of one learned in the three (Caturvidyam is a pseudo epic term for the Vedas). The word triveda remains the usual form (tritaṃam sevitam sarvaṃ, ix 64, 21). Besides Caturveda as an epithet of a god (illustrated in PW) we find in the late passage iii, 313, 10 ff. pathahāḥ pathahāc ca i va ye ca nye castracintakah sarve vyasasino nurkha, vai kṛivāṇa sa paṇḍitah, caturvedo 'pi durvṛttah sa cudrad atiricyat yeo 'gñihotraparo dantah sa brāhmaṇa itī smṛtah. On the order of names referred to above the lead of the Atharva is found also in the Mahabhasya (IS xii, p 432), the Epic passage is xii 17, 91.

"The tradition of 'lost Vedas,' (on this neonic occurrence (xii, 10, 16 ff.), compare vedacrutih pranasta xii 346, 9 the story in 348 and the quotation in the text below. The modified vrata rules, vikṛivante vedavadah are referred to in xii, 233, 33), and 'divided Vedas' is well known. There was at first but one Veda, but after the Kṛta age men became men of three, men of two, men of one and men of no Vedas, triveda, driveda, ekaveda, anṛk, iii, 149, 14 29, and v 43 42, castrasu bhinnesu being Vedas, bhinnas tada vedah xii 350, 42 (by Apantaratamas). The last passage is peculiar in the use (cl 41-47) of vedakhyane crutih karva, and in the name of Kali sa kṛṣṇa (as well as tīṣya). The former as Kali is still starred in pw. The latter is masculine in R vi, 35, 14 (also starred as such in pw). The word occurs also in xii, 341, 83" (Hopkins pp 2-3).

Vaicesika

"This word is used as an adjective, of gunas, etc. in the sense of excellent, but the system is unknown in the main Epic though it is referred to in the passage cited above, in i, 70, 43 44, and also in ii, 5, 5 (rakya pañcarayayukta, another proof of the lateness of the Kaccit section, (The former passage, after mentioning those endowed with nyaya tattvatmavijnana adds nanvakyasamabharasamarayavicaradah, vicesakaryavidbhicca athapanaksepasiddhantaparamarthajnatam gataih karyakaranavedibhih, which may refer to either system. The passages have been cited by the author of Das Mahabharata als Epos, etc, p 226, who admits that the five "avyayas", as he calls them twice imply the Vaicesika system, whether the five avayavas here mentioned be terms implying Nyaya or Vaicesika. Kanada's name appears first in the Harivansa (see below, p 98, and above p 89).

The four philosophies

"In xii, 350, 64 ff (compare 350, 1, pracaranti), it is said that there are four current philosophies, jñānani, the Samkhya yoga, Pañcaratra, Vedaranyaka or Vedah, and Pacupata. Kapila declared the Samkhya, Hiranyagarbha, the yoga, (see the note on this verse just below. As Yoga-teacher of Daityas, Cakra is mentioned, i, 66, 43. Both Vishnu and Civa are credited with being Tegalords (loc cit by Holtzmann, Das Mbh im Osten und Westen, p 110), Apantaratamas is called the Teacher of the Vedas ("termed by some Pracinagarbha"), Civa declared the Pacupata religion, Vishnu, the whole Pañcaratra. 'In all these philosophies Vishnu is the nistha, or chief thing' (In the Vasudeva religious philosophy of

brishnaism, as expounded in xii 315 7 ff, some people after death become paramanubhutas, very fine sprites, and enter Aniruddha, then as manobhutas or mental entities, they enter Pradyumna, thence they go to Iiva (Samkarsana) Such people are "the best priests and Samkhya and Bhagavatas." Finally, devoid of all unspiritual constituents, traigunyahina they enter Paramatman (hetrajna nirgunatmaka), or Vasudeva. These are the four forms of God. The name of God is immaterial. Rudra and Vishnu are one being, satvam (ham, divided in two, xii, 342, 27 (they are synonyms like bṛhad Brahma and mahat, 337, 2, parjaya vacakah cabdah, Vishnu may be called Civa, and Brahman may be called Intellect)." (Hopkins pp 96-97)

"Kapila is authoritative in all philosophical matters and his name covers every sort of doctrine. He is in fact the only founder of a philosophical system known to the Epic. Other names of founders are either those of mere Gods or disciples of Kapila. Badarayana and Patanjali (in the Sarvadarsana-samgraha it is said that Patanjali made (atha voga-nucasanam, i 1) an nucasana or secondary collection (as anu is explained) based on earlier Puranic materials. The verse attributed in this connection to the Yajñavalkya Smṛti (158 17 p 240 of Cowell's translation) has caused the Petersburg Lexicon to postulate another Smṛti of the same name. I think it is a mere lapsus for Vāsa's Smṛti for the verse cited ('Hiranyagarbha and no other ancient, is the declarer of Yoga') occurs xii, 340 65. It has occurred to me that this verse might imply Patanjali and the "no other" be a distinct refutation of his claim, the Epic preferring divine authority. But this is perhaps too pregnant] are unknown even as names, and Jaimini and Gautama appear only as sages, not as leaders of speculation. Candilya (otherwise said to be known in the Epic) is respectfully cited on Yoga not as founder but as recommending Yoga concentration (prthagbhutesu srstesu caturtha ramakarmasu samadhiu vogaṃ cāvatā. (maduktam vakyam) chandilyaḥ camam abravīt xii, 351, 14). As a teacher of unconditioned Brahman, Atreya is lauded in xiii 137, 3 and in xii, 319 50, a list of teachers of the twenty fifth (spiritual) principle is given as having instructed the Gandharva Vicitrasena, Jaigṛeavya, Asita, Devala, Paracara, Varsaganya, Bhṛgu, Pancacikha, Kapila, Cuka, Gautama, Arstisena, Garga, Narada, Asuri, Pulastya, Sanatkumara, Cukra, Kacyapa, seventeen mixed gods, saints and philosophers, of whom two are important besides Kapila namely Asuri and Pancacikha his pupils while one system (explained below) is referred also to Asita Devala.

"There seems to be no reason to doubt that Kapila was a real (human) philosopher, and not a mere shadow of a divinity. The fact that his name is also given to divinities proves the opposite as little as does his deification, for it is customary to deify sages and for divinities to have sages' names." (Hopkins pp 97-98)

"Narada 'knew the difference between Samkhya and Yoga,' ii, 5, 7. Caunaka is "rapt with metaphysics, adhyatma, skilled in Yoga and in Samkhya," iii, 2, 15." (Hopkins p 100)"

"There is no fixed Epic text because Hindu Epic poetry was never fixed. All Epic poems were transmitted at first orally, and the various re-writers treated them exactly as the rhapsodists had previously done, altered and added as they pleased. Reconstruction of the original text is therefore out of the question. All that can be done is to exercise the most palpable interpolations in each traditional rendering.

"Neither of the Epics, as such, is recognized before the late period of the Gṛhyasutras, and the first Epic recognized here and in other Sutras is the Bharata. The question has often been raised, which Epic is the older? In our present state of knowledge it may be said that this question cannot now, and probably never can be answered in one word. In the first place, it will always be idle to speak of either

Epic as the older without specifying whether one means the present text ; for that these, in the case of either Epic, are convertible terms is an idea refuted by even a superficial acquaintance with the poems. Assuming, however, that the question implies priority of Epic qua Epic as a new genus of literature, and whether this form first arose as Ramayana or (Maha) Bharata, this too cannot be answered categorically be cause parts of the latter are older than the former and the former is older than the mass of the latter, as will be shown. Personally, I have no doubt that the Pandu (Pandava) form of the great Epic is later than the Rama Epic, but, since one was a slow outgrowth from a Punjab Kuru Epic and the other, of unknown antecedents, was developed far to the East, in much more polished form, while only the Bharata is recognised in Vedic literature, I have no little doubt that there was a Bharata Epic before there was a Ramayana," (Hopkins pp 60 51)

It is thus quite clear that the Bharata Samhitā which embodied the different thought strata of the Aryans up to the time of its compilation incorporated them into the texts of the Mahabharata. They form parts of the Bharata Samhita and as such a short summary of its original kernel is given in the very first section of the Mahabharata in its present form. They are out of context in their present position in the texts and can only be understood if they are taken with the portions which are treated in the subsequent portions of the Mahabharata.

The Bharata Samhita had been edited and revised and eventually incorporated in the Mahabharata. There seems to be no doubt that in its original form the Bharata Samhita was a very ancient work. Having had its origin in the Rig Vedic sacrificial schools, it preserves not only an intimate connection with the Vedas but also marks a practical advance on their philosophy. It is for this that it has received so much attention and study from the orthodox Brahmins, who have lost sight of important facts relating to the growth and development of the Mahabharata legends.

It is now necessary to find out what constituted the Bharata Samhita, which was based on the school of Narada. The Samkhya system lays stress on dualism, and therefore the Bhakti cult, which centres round the worship of Narayana, has its origin in that school. This has been clearly brought out in the Srimad Bhagvata Purana, in which Kapila propounds the theistic principles of his system to his mother *. What is said in the Mahabharata is clearly borne out by the Srimad Bhagavata Purana. For this the early evidence is all the more important. It is evident from the fact that the unique contribution of Kapila or his school has been to combine knowledge with virtuous life through means of Ekanta (faith). It has been already shown that the philosophy of Kapila had a tendency to break up old society, for according to the evidence of the Mahabharata, he preached against the performance of sacrifices as leading to salva-

* Skandha 3, Chapter 29,

tion. He advocated renunciation through knowledge as the chief means of salvation. The cult of Bhakti, which grew up in the school of Narada, was then strengthened by the Samkhya system of philosophy.

The other five well-known Schools of Indian Philosophy were evolved out of the system of Samkhya Philosophy first enunciated by Narada and then developed by Kapila Gautama, who is mentioned as the pupil of Ayodhidharma in the Paushya Parva and a sage in whose family Nyaya Philosophy was developed. Vyasa was a student of the Nyaya School, but he founded a new school and therefore fell out with his preceptor. The fanciful popular story to explain the name of Akshipada Gautama only proves that Veda-Vyasa was posterior to Gautama and also Kapila. His thesis was the latest development of the Vedic schools, which began to discourse on metaphysics. The school of Vedanta was the final phase of Vedic literature. Veda-Vyasa is said to have been a pupil of Gautama, the author of logic, whom he is said to have offended by his Brahma Sutra. The result was the origin of the Mahabharata and the Bharata Samhita was merged in it in such a way as to make it hard to trace it.

If the whole mass of evidence is collected from the Mahabharata there will remain no shadow of doubt that the genesis of the metaphysical speculation centred on the performance of sacrifices sanctioned by the Rig-Veda. The great sage Vasishtha and the king Visvamitra quarrelled over the point whether animals should be sacrificed at the Yajnas or not, Vasishtha being of opinion that they should not be, Visvamitra maintaining the contrary opinion. Beginning with the Yajnas of Pururaba, Nahusa and Yayati, who had performed animal sacrifices, but could not obtain permanence in heaven for their moral lapses, one comes to the story of the king Uparichara, who had at first taken the side of the Gods against the Brahmins and had given his opinion in favour of animal sacrifice, for which the Brahmins cursed him and hurled him down from heaven. Eventually he was saved by the great God Narayana, whose devotee he became, and this legend marks the end of the Bharata Samhita and the beginning of the Mahabharata. That the present interesting Epic portion of the Mahabharata had no place in its earlier text is borne out in the Anukramanika chapter.

The exposition of the Narayana cult formed the most important theme of the Bharata Samhita. The Bharata Samhita, connected with the sacrificial schools of the Rig-Veda, contains valu-

the name of that country, and the name of the
 kingdom of the Rigveda. The story of Krishna's
 childhood regarding the demoniacs of the Yavana was a
 story going to be destroyed. It is very much
 relevant movement, and was going to be a
 revolutionary as it could be in one place. It is about the
 exact and religious emotions of the time. Its religion has been
 characterised as Ardent Krishna religion. It is a religion of the
 Krishna. The name of Krishna has been going to be
 regard to Devotion and the Purana which have been briefly treated
 before.

Now the story of Krishna was told by Veda-Vyasa. The
 Bharata Samhita had become very popular by the time of
 the story of Veda-Vyasa, the author of the Bharata Samhita. It was
 the first time that the story of Krishna was told in a popular
 language. It was told in a language of the people which presented
 a course of spiritual and moral education to the people in general.
 The sage Vyasa undertook to rewrite the Bharata Samhita to
 make it suitable for popular distribution. He subsequently found out
 that the Narada version of the Bharata Samhita was more popular
 than his own and accordingly he re-wrote the Bharata Samhita as the
 Mahabharata, which is called, in the Narada and the story in the
 Bhagavata. Portions of the Bharata Samhita were removed from
 their proper context and any relevant portions were altogether
 omitted and used in a different manner in the Mahabharata, Har-
 vamsa and the Bhagavata. But it should also be remembered

that the cult of Bhakti (Devotion) was based on Narada's system
 and some of the portions which were subsequently expunged from
 the Mahabharata were perhaps preserved almost in their original
 form in the Bhagavata Purana and in the Ramayana. The Ashv-
 Gita, the story of Devotion and Krishna, were the more
 prominent themes told in the Bharata Samhita which were expunged
 from the current edition of the Mahabharata but found their
 place in the Bhagavata Purana. The story of the Ramayana
 had its origin in a legend of the Bharata Samhita, and came to
 be separately and elaborately treated in the heroic poem of
 Valmiki.

The University of Saunaka was responsible for the production
 of many Puranas, etc. It is not improbable that the relevant parts
 of the Bharata Samhita were placed within the Puranas to consti-
 tute their essential parts, and it is for this that the majority of
 the Puranas contain Sauti's and Sounaka's discourses and Epic

subjects were briefly referred to. The school of Vedānta, which is propounded by Veda-Vyāsa, is the last phase of Vedic literature. The Bharata Saṁhita, which is based upon the Nārada Saṁkhya School of Philosophy, reached its final form in the school of Veda-Vyāsa, the author of the Brahma Sūtra, in the Mahābhārata. They mark two great epochs in Indian History and almost complete the ancient cultural cycle, with its thesis, anti-thesis and synthesis. Both the systems of philosophy abide in the heart and in the practices of the people of India, and this accounts for the phenomenal popularity of the Bharata Saṁhita.

The cycle of Svayambhūva Manu, in which Kapila propounded his philosophy, had already attained its culminating point. Society, politics and economics had passed through many stages of evolution, and the simple beliefs of an older and more primitive age, as represented by the dogmas of the priests, could hardly satisfy the yearning questions. The improved moral standards of the people were the outcome of the amelioration of their economic condition. The caste system had not yet been evolved in water-tight compartments and it required definitions and differentiations which had to be completed in order to avoid the inevitable clash or a movement towards obliteration of all their cherished distinctions, as was later on sought to be brought about by Buddhism. As the Bharata Saṁhita represented the synthesis of Aryan culture and civilisation, it became the manual of the people *par excellence*.

Now the solution of the complicated problems of society which was undertaken by the Bharata Saṁhita was very clearly illustrated in the dialogues between Yudhishthira and Bhīṣma. Yudhishthira enquired of Bhīṣma if the rulings of the scriptures prescribing penances for any breach or deviation in the performance of any sacrificial rites or from any path of conduct, could be regarded as binding on all occasions and for all persons. He pointed out the contradictions involved in the injunctions of the scriptures and also the changeability of the Vedic practices from age to age. What was Dharma for one class of persons was not Dharma for another. The great sages, like Agastya, were said to have accumulated merit by taking part in the sacrifices in which animals were slaughtered. Now these contradictions in the practices of good men and bad men, and the dogmatic assertions of both as to the respective religious merits of the conduct followed by them, required clear explanation. Bhīṣma answered him by citing the discourse between Tuladhara and Jāṭhī, who on account of his austere

penances had become very proud and whom a revelation from above had directed to see Puladhara, a merchant in Benares, and to learn from him the real Dharma. The student of history may notice some points of similarity between the instructions of Puladhara to Bṛama Jyoti and those of Buddha. The substance of the instructions of Puladhara was as follows:—

Cruelty to animals must be abandoned or if that be not possible it must be minimised as far as possible. Friendship with all must be practised. He must have faith in an imminent personal God and must regard the living world as the manifestation of this divinity. He must be indifferent to praise or criticism and must be detached from the pursuit of worldly pleasure. Loss of dear ones should not affect him as they meet accidentally in the world as two wooden pieces are brought together in the current for a short time to be separated from each other for ever. He must give up sorrow. The person giving to other persons or animals protection from fear receives the same reward as one would if he had performed all the sacrifices. He then pointed out the distinction between the crude religion which centred round the sacrifices and the more refined religion which had its origin in the desire for the attainment of the Brahma.

In one essential point there is a striking difference between Buddhism and the religion of the Bharata Samhita, the ethical code of both being non-sectarian and anti-sacrificial. It is the earnest faith in the godhead which is the most important feature of the Bharata Samhita and distinguishes it from the agnostic (non theistic) code of morality propounded by Buddha.

The Narayana cult is the most prominent and outstanding feature of the Bharata Samhita, which is clearly an authoritative exposition of the cult of Narayana worship. The Bharata Samhita is also regarded as embodying the Vedic religion. Now in the Vedic hymns Narayana as the supreme God is conspicuously absent. A Rishi by the name of Narayana was the author of the Purusha Sukta of 10th Mandala of Rig-Veda. The sage Narayana propounded the organic theory of society and this theory became later on the sheet anchor of Brahmanism, which seized upon this verse in its literal sense and utilised it to the fullest extent for asserting their superior position in the social order of the Aryans.

The word "Narayana" had etymological possibilities which the Brahmins fully exploited. It is a compound of two words, *viz*, Nara and Ayana, which mean water and path, respectively. The word therefore means the great God who leads men across the river of life and death. How Narayana came to be identified with Vishnu, a minor Vedic God, is just as much a historical riddle as how Siva became identical with Rudra of the Vedic hymns.

The unique position which the Bharata Samhita occupies in Indian religion and literature is largely due to the solutions it offered to many vexed questions of the time. The worship of Narayana and Siva,

which was introduced among the Aryans by linking them up with the Vedic deities Vishnu and Rudra, may be regarded as a triumph of the Aryan mind which accomplished harmonious relations between the conquering immigrants and the aborigines of the land, whose religion and worship they at first abhorred. The Vedic pantheon of deities consisting of Indra, Varuna, Agni, etc., was too closely identified with the conquering people and hence could not be acceptable to the Non-Aryans, who because of their superior numbers had got to be admitted into the fold of the Aryan religion and to be dominated culturally. And thus the worship of Narayana was introduced.

This was done by a process of sublimation. The psychology of the common people, who could more easily understand description than speculation, was taken into account when the new cult was propounded. There is a complete and satisfactory evidence of the Pre-Buddhist origin of the Narayana cult in the following hymn of the Taittiriya Aranyaka.

नारायण परो ज्योतिरामा नारायण परः ।

नारायण पर ब्रह्मतत्त्व नारायण परः ॥

नारायण परो ध्याता ध्यान नारायण परः ।

Taittiriya Aranyaka is closely connected with the Vedic Sacrificial Schools and hence the question arises why and how Narayana worship was introduced. It is conclusively proved by this quotation that Narayana worship made its appearance in the Sacrificial Vedic Schools, not as one of the many deities who were invoked and propitiated at the sacrifices but as the principal God, who is described as the supreme contemplator, nay, He is conceived even as contemplation itself. He is here hinted as superior to Brahma, for He is "Brahma Tattvah" Himself, i.e., embodiment of Brahma knowledge. Now these attributes stated in the usual philosophic form of the Upanishads is very interesting as bearing upon the popular conception of Narayana. Narayana is the supreme God who, immersed in meditation, reposes on the hood of the Snake God Vasuki in the midst of universal water. This popular notion, which is described in the Mahabharata as well as in many of the Puranas, furnishes us with the clue to the introduction of the cult of Narayana. The well-known book Chandi, containing as it does the odes to Goddess Durga, is revered all over India. It contains an ode in the eleventh chapter; worshipping the goddess as Narayani—a point of some interest.

From the Mahabharata, we learn that Vasuki was the Snake God. His sister was married to Jarat-Karu and the great sage Astika was the offspring of this marriage. It was he who stopped the snake sacrifice of Janmejoya I. This story probably contains a great historical truth. From the time of Parikshit I, down to the time of Janmejoya I, there

was a great conflict between the Nagas and the Kshatriyas, who were certainly helped by a few of the Brahmanic class, but the Nagas allied themselves with other influential Brahmanical families and through their intercession, the war between the Vedic Aryans and the Nagas stopped. The fact that Narayana, the new chief God of the Brahmins, rested on the hood of the Snake God marked a happy reconciliation between the two warring races. Intermarriages between Brahmins and Kshatriyas on the one hand and the Nagas on the other are frequently mentioned in the Mahabharata, and it is quite clear that Nagas very soon became culturally incorporated with the Aryans.

In the Mahabharata one comes across the views of different sages and thinkers of ancient India on practical life, along with a short exposition of the philosophy on which the practical code of life enunciated by them is based. This enables one to form a correct estimate of the problems which confronted them, and the solutions which they offered give one an insight into their personal predilections. No student of history can disregard the mass of information which is collected in the different discourses throughout Vana Parva, Udyoga Parva, Santi Parva and Anusashana Parva of the Mahabharata.

The questions which occurred to each of the sages and thinkers whose views were propounded in the said discourses relate to the right conduct of men in the four stages of life. Unless sacrifices were the all important social phenomena of the time, they would not have been given the prominence which they have in the Mahabharata. Coupled with this were the six daily observances binding upon every twice-born teacher and pupil in Aryan culture in India. Kapila, to a great extent, ignored them and pointed out the way of salvation by renunciation through knowledge. Kapila is the recognised author of the Samkhya system of philosophy. It has been shown already that the doctrines of Kapila were highly revolutionary in a society which was based upon a carefully prepared routine of public and private life in its four stages. Whether Kapila was actually connected with the Narayana cult as its originator is a matter of speculation. In the Bharata Samhita, in the Go-Kapilya discourse, he is said to be a believer in Narayana. Though one may be inclined to be sceptical about the theistic aspect of the school of Kapila, yet one may not reject the evidence of the Mahabharata in this matter. The Samkhya system contains only the bare fragments of his metaphysical doctrines, and though they are assigned to Kapila, their actual composition was of such a later date than when they were formulated, that the evidence of the Mahabharata cannot be ignored on this point, for Kapila, the author of Akalika Pralaya, is associated the tradition of the race with the cult of Narayana worship.

Veda-Vyasa, who propounded the Brahma Sutra, struck the chord of compromise when he clearly advocated the cause of sacrifice. The extreme school dogmatically asserted the spiritual value of animal sacrifices. They maintained that the offerer of sacrifices would ascend to heaven after death as a reward for having performed them in this world. Some of them, in fact, said that those who had performed them in the past very successfully had been bodily transported to heaven and had replaced even the great Indra in the rulership of heaven. Now these irrational views were rejected by Vyasa as they had been scornfully repudiated by Kapila. The great author of Brahma Sutra was not only a great philosopher, who lived in a world of metaphysical speculations, but one who was deeply connected with the solution of social problems as they presented themselves to him. In his Brahma Sutra he dwelt on the true relations between Atman and Paramatman, and offered a synthesis between the individualistic school of Samkhya and the pantheistic teachings of the Upanishads; but what is important to the student of Indian history is the deep insight which he showed into the social requirements of the time. He resuscitated sacrifices from the obloquy to which they had been subjected since the time of Kapila. This is what he says about the practices discarded by Kapila.

"Gifts, study of the Vedas, sacrifices, penances, modesty, guilelessness and self control, these increase one's energy and dissipate one's sins."

"He should adore the fire and Brahmanas and bow to the Gods. He should avoid all sorts of inauspicious talk, and all acts of unrighteous injury."

"The body with individual soul within it is an excellent car. When sacrifices and religious rights are made its Upastha (seat), shame its Varutha, Upaya and Apaya its Kuvara, the vital air called Prana its Yogi, knowledge and the span of existence its points for tying the horses, carefulness its beautiful Vandhura, the assumption of good conduct its nemi, vision, touch, scent and hearing its four horses, wisdom its nabhi, all the scriptures its paratoda, certain knowledge of the scriptural sayings its driver, the Soul its firmly seated rider, faith and self-control its fore runners, renunciation its inseparable companion following behind and bent upon doing it good, purity the path along which it goes, meditation its goal, then may that car reach Brahma and shine there effulgently."

Thus Veda Vyasa is disclosed in his complete personality, and one can assign to him, by means of this, his true place in the evolution of Indian culture, which does not consist of speculations divorced from realities of life but of thoughts helpful to the reformation of society.

The radical and revolutionary doctrines of Kapila probably tended to disintegrate the Aryan social order. And one must not forget that the Aryan culture, which was represented by Aryan domination, could only be maintained in its politico-economic aspect by a rigid adherence to the social order, evolved out of the conflict between the Aryans and the Non-

*Shanti Parva, Chapter CCXXXV, page 356, Sloka 6, †Sloka 8.

‡Shanti Parva, Chapter CCXXXVI, page 358, Slokas 8-11

Aryans. If the doctrines of Kapila spread, as they were likely to in view of their intense rationalism, the whole Aryan society would be engulfed in a racial cataclysm. It became necessary to give the Vedic practices a new interpretation and a new outlook, and this was done by Veda Vyasa. The Mahabharata, because it was a popular book, supplements our information about its author with the part played by him in the historical development of ancient Aryan society.

In the Brahma Sutra, Veda-Vyasa regarded Brahma as the supreme being, in the Bharata Samhita Narayana is called the supreme being. It is said that Narada, the divine minstrel, learnt it from the great sage Narayana himself, as well as from Sanat Kumara. He transmitted the knowledge of this to Veda-Vyasa, and from Veda-Vyasa downwards Bhishma received enlightenment on this subject from his father Santanu. It was learned by Yudhishthira from Bhishma as well as from Veda-Vyasa. Now one must confess that he is presented with a riddle in the history of the origin and spread of the Narayana cult as it occurs in the Narayana section of the Santi Parva. In the evolution of Indian history one is presented with merely accomplished facts. All the traces of normal historical evolutions which are the outcome of social conditions are very often obliterated. It has been mentioned already that Kapila and Veda-Vyasa were both connected with the cult of Narayana worship. It would not be a far-fetched conclusion on one's part, if from these facts as supplied by the great Epic, it is held that the philosophical doctrines which were propounded by the Indian sages were written in the usual Sutra style and the vocabulary was developed in the Vedic Philosophical Schools, but in the popular discourses of the Mahabharata these same sages expressed their thoughts in a manner which was more intelligible to the common people. The God Narayana by the time of the Bharata Samhita and the Mahabharata had replaced the Vedic Gods, etc., from the worship of the people.

Veda-Vyasa of the Narayana portion of the Mahabharata is the son of the sage Narayana and he is clearly mentioned in Harivamsa, the sequel of the Mahabharata, as Apantaratama, which name also occurs in the Narayana section of Santi Parva. The title "Vyasa" is assumed even now by a person who explains the Puranas to the audience. The various editors of the Mahabharata were known by this name, but the speaker who read Bharata Samhita, was a disciple of Narada and was no other than Apantaratama. He must be distinguished from Veda-Vyasa who was the son of Patasara and who is perhaps not the author of the Brahma Sutra. The author of Brahma Sutra is Apantaratama, the son of the sage Narayana. The original Bharata Samhita lies scattered in different portions of the Mahabharata, but the main didactic portion is

preserved in *Santi Parva* in the discourses between *Vyasa* and *Shuka*, *Bhisma* and *Yudhisthira*. It must be observed that the son of *Parasara* was born not as a result of incontinence on the part of his father, but through the boon of God *Siva*.

The *Narayana* cult, which was evolved out of racial conflicts, was used for the solution of a great question that was agitating the minds of the Aryan immigrants. It was only in the *Mahabharata*, in which the very important is mixed up with the trivial that some of the most important stages of the development of Aryan thought can be traced with some measure of certainty. The field covered by the Epic is so vast, and the problems which came up for solution at the hands of the great sages and thinkers so baffling, that it is quite natural that one should feel a sense of bewilderment at the complicated task of allocating the different thought strata to define historical periods about which our knowledge is deplorably inadequate. The historians who had the materials of the Epics had all shirked the task and dismissed the accounts thereof as legendary, though many of the kings and sages of the *Mahabharata* were Vedic personalities who figured either as the composers of the *Rik* hymns or as kings whose benefactions to the priests elicited their warm admiration and gratitude.

From the earliest times connected with Aryan immigration, there were two religious schools whose differences in their outlook on life resulted in the evolution of two cultural groups in this country. These relate to *Devajajna* and *Pitriyajna*, which mean the path of God worship and that of ancestor worship, respectively. That ancestor worship was a very early Indo-Germanic institution is well-known to all students of history. The God worship which sprang up in India was connected with the adoration of the natural phenomena, later on represented as the seats of different divinities. In other Indo-Germanic countries there was a working harmony between the two different forms of worship, but the specialisation which is a specially remarkable feature of the Aryans in India led to a dispute between the cults of ancestor worship and God-worship. The dispute must have reached an acute stage. Those who worshipped the Gods formed themselves into a group under the name of Solar dynasty (*Surya Vamsa*) and those who advocated ancestor worship finally depicted themselves as belonging to the Lunar dynasty (*Chandra Vamsa*). The Epic and the Puranas say* that both of them were sprung from the same ancestor. Now this view is accepted by *Pargiter* in his dynastic lists. The testimony of *Aitareya-lochanam*, which quotes *Satapatha Brahmana*, is invaluable. †

**Aitareya Brahmana*, p. 91. †*cf.* *Aitareya Brahmana*, Vol. IV *Aitareya lochanam*, p. 91, Asiatic Society of Bengal Edition.

Here one has three paths for three groups. To those who worship the Gods, the Sun is said to be their glory (उदेति). To those who make offerings to their deceased ancestors, the Moon holds the same place as the Sun does to the divinity worshipper, and a third is added for the common people ately fire. It appears that the Kshatriyas and the Brahmins had split up into two categories of God- and ancestor-worshippers, with the common people still clinging to the worship of fire.

Now it is evident from the above that through the cult of Narayana worship a practical harmony was brought about between, at first, the two cultural groups which existed in India. It is from that point of view, not from mere coincidence that the Bharata Samhita and the Ramayana have the worship of Narayana as their central theme. The Bharata Samhita celebrated the deeds of the Lunar dynasty, i.e., those who were ancestor-worshippers, whereas Rama is the greatest hero of the Solar dynasty. As Devayajna degenerated in later times into the worship of evil spirits also, the Ramayana is connected with the popular theology of the Atharva-Veda and is used as an incantation for expelling evil spirits even today. The tradition that the Lunar dynasty was connected with ancestor-worship is still strongly clung to by the people, as evidenced by the recital of portions of the Mahabharata at funeral ceremonies.

The Narayana cult, however, was developed on the same philosophical line as the Brahma Vidya, which was connected purely with the school of Devayajna. In fact, in His attributes Narayana was made more embracing than the supreme God Brahma. He, as Vishnu, takes his share of offerings at the sacrifices in an invisible form, and He is only visible to those who are His great devotees—such as Vasistha, the King Uparicnara, Narada, etc. If Brahma is regarded as the creator of the world, it is Narayana who upholds the creation through contemplation of the active principles of life. He punishes moral transgressions and rewards virtue. The other Gods, through the development of mythological phantasy among the people, were shown to have been guilty of acts which, in the period of more developed moral consciousness, were regarded as heinous crimes. Narayana is the irreproachable Supreme Being (Mahapurusha) who is above every being found among mortals as well as gods. The ancestor-worshippers were told that the oblations and libations which they offered to their ancestors reached Him and none else*. Thus the cult of Narayana, which appeared as a sequel to the Vedic cult of ancestor worship and god worship, not only came as a solution of the racial strife between the Nagas and the

* Bhanti Parva, Chapter 310

Aryans, but also healed up a sore within the body politic of the latter, who had diverged in two different directions

The Bharata Samhita was not confined merely to the upper classes to the exclusion of the common people. It is generally conceded that the Aryans conquered the Non-Aryans. Of these the snake worshippers were quite powerful and had attained a high degree of civilisation. The Brahmins and the Kshatriyas had no hesitation, after a period of conflict with them, in terminating it by a cultural and racial fusion and it is quite clear that in the form in which Narayana worship was instituted the distinctive contribution of the Nagas might be traced. The Aryan policy was imposed upon other people less civilised than the Nagas. The Nishadas, who lived by hunting, the Kiratas, wood dwellers, the Rakshasas, the powerful people who were gradually driven to the south where they still remained powerful must have outnumbered the Aryans, who though strong in arms must have looked upon the numerical superiority of the conquered people with no friendly eye in the beginning. They were gradually brought within the pale of Aryan civilisation and admitted within the caste system.

In the sacrifices, they were addressed by the Brahmanic priests on different days. The Aryan conquerors very soon realised that domination could only be permanently ensured if these people were culturally admitted into the fold of the Aryans. The Epics teem with examples of intermarriage between the conquered and the conqueror, but that was hardly found to effect the relative position of the several races dwelling together in India. The Aryan mind, which is represented in Vedic literature, is peculiarly philosophical and therefore synthetic. The multitude of gods and goddesses in the Hindu Pantheon was introduced in its elastic orbit by a desire on the part of the conquerors to accommodate the conquered people in a cultural plane in which religious beliefs played a very important part. There is evidence throughout the Epics and the Puranas that the great God Mahadeva was worshipped by Nishadas, Kiratas and Rakshasas. In fact, in the social and political conditions of India which obtained in the very early times, violence was the order of the day, and the great God was worshipped by the warriors at the time of war. The god one worships, reflects one's moral nature at its best. The Non-Aryans, though powerful in war, had not reached the cultural heights of the Aryans. The conception of Siva (Mahadeva) in popular imagination was connected with all that was grotesque and malevolent. He is represented as being covered with ashes. He revels in intoxicating drugs. His associates are ghosts and ugly attendants. He is naked and dances wild dances at times of battle. The Non-Aryan Barbarians worshipped

His form the form of Purusha, which symbolises the principles of procreation.

Now it required a good deal of imagination on the part of the Aryan sages to transform a grosser conception into the philosophic height achieved by the mythology which clusters round the popular God Mahadeva. He has been connected with the Vedic worship of fire, which has been the chief practice of the common people, as has been shown by the name of the Sapta-iti Brahmana, Siva being another name for Fire in the form of Rudra. He has two aspects—the one is the reflection of the fire, which is beneficent, which is the outcome of the sacrifice, and Uma, his consort who is the embodiment of all womanly nature. In the dual aspects they are supposed to represent the totality of creation and also bear a mark of their origin from the sacrifice, namely, their chief physical signs. In the fourteenth chapter of the Mahabharata Parva, the attribute of Mahadeva are described. They comprise almost all the great individualistic diversities which constitute the totality of the human race.

It is not that the worship of Mahadeva was recognised and introduced at a very early date. It is not only a design, but also the growth of a fine old popular religion upon the intellectual classes. The worship of Narayana found a different footing, however. It is the starting point of new era of political and cultural development and is associated in the Mahabharata and the Bhagavata Purana with the great sage Kapila and Narada, and Narayana is represented as a being even above Siva. In the Mahabharata, which is philosophically very advanced, these words occur, "Men worship Siva, the destroyer, because they fear him."

The origin of the Hindu Trinity is a very interesting study. In the Rig-Veda the conception of the unity of godhead is seldom met with. The word "Brahma" originally meant "Praise." It was also used to mean "Sacrifice" and greatness. The word Brahmanaspati and Brihaspati connote the Lord of Prayer. In a later phase of the development of Aryan thought, one marks a new meaning being put to the word "Brahma." He is said to be the supreme being, the Creator of the Universe. He is metaphysically studied in the schools of the Upanishads and other branches of Vedic literature, but the cult of Narayana could be traced also to a very early period. It is connected with the school of Kapila, who is said to have further founded the system of Samkhya. The Narayana cult can claim a spiritual affinity with the Samkhya system in its pronounced dualism, as distinguished from the monism of the Upanishads.

Laymen ascribe creation to the principles of procreation. The Upanishadic view that all living beings are sprung from bliss and merge

in bliss was too metaphysical for them to understand. Hence the sages recognised the worship of Mahadeva in its popular Non-Aryan form of Phallus. In the Rig Veda the Non-Aryans have been characterised as worshippers of Phallus. It is at a later time in the history of cultural development that the cult of Siva worship originated. It did not discard popular notions, but improved upon them by giving them a higher spiritual and metaphysical significance.

The Bharata Samhita is explanatory of the Vedas, and it must not be forgotten that it was done by amplification. The Bharata Samhita was meant to be read by philosophers as well as by ordinary men to whom the Vedas were not intelligible. The Vedic ideas and the constant tendency in them to explain natural phenomena and the ordinary occurrences by means of a higher law governing them led to much abstraction and symbolism. The symbolism which one finds in the Vedas, where it is generally understood as such, gave rise to myths, by which abstract ideas could be easily explained to the people.

These myths were very frequently used in the earlier portions of the Bharata Samhita. The philosophical speculations which lie at the root of these myths were explained in later portions of the book. That they were inter-related and could not be separated from one another will be shown at a subsequent place. It is incumbent here to point out the fact that the word Vyasa Kuta—riddle of Vyasa, the compiler of the Mahabharata,—refers to this, to the apparent irrelevance of earlier topics which are disconnected with one another, unless they are explained by reference to their amplifications in the subsequent portions of the Mahabharata.

The cult of Mahadeva having had its origin in popular beliefs, marks a new development of Aryan thought. Chronologically its admission in the fold of Aryan culture may be regarded as somewhat later than the introduction of the Narayana cult. But there is no reason to doubt that at the time of the compilation of the Bharata Samhita, which may be assigned to the age of Svyambhuva Manu, the Pasupata (Mahadeva or Siva) cult was already in existence. The Vedic origin of the three of the new chief divinities was now established, Brahma the supreme being is directly derived from the Vedic vocabulary, though its Vedic connotation was completely altered, Narayana is connected with Vishnu, and Mahadeva with Rudra, minor Vedic divinities.

Aryan mythology kept pace with this new form of worship. The three chief gods, Brahma, Vishnu or Narayana and Siva or Mahadeva, were explained with regard to their respective attributes by means of stories, which are all to be found in the Mahabharata. In India anyone

who wants to effect any synthesis tries to do so through the means of religion. The attempt of the great Emperor Akbar in this direction is noteworthy, because he tried to effect a cultural fusion between the Hindus and the Mohammedans by means of a new religion, and in this he was quite in line with the traditional habits of the Hindus. This explains why, in this country, there are so many religions which though they originated with the idea of effecting synthesis succeeded in intensifying diversity, because in India it is as easy to set up a new religion as it is difficult for it to replace an older popular belief.

The University of Ayodhādāmya, which has been referred to already, produced pupils who played an important part in the great cultural ferment which agitated the minds of the people of that time. It has been shown that the Solar and Lunar dynasties, which represented two distinct lines of kings, had two forms of worship, Pitrājña and Devājña. Upamanyu, who was a disciple of Ayodhādāmya, was connected with the introduction of the Mahadeva cult. He got it from the school of Tandī, another sage and devotee of Siva. It must be remembered, and it is a matter of great interest to students of Indian history, that Upamanyu was a composer of Vedic hymns. One should not discard the evidence of the Mahābhārata in this respect, for the Mahābhārata was expressly undertaken not only to explain the Vedas, but also to supplement one's information about the Vedic sages. In the discourse between Vasudeva and Yudhisthira, where the former cites the name of sage Upamanyu as having explained to him the cult of Mahadeva, one comes across all the legends and metaphysics connected with this new school. Though some of these are interpolations, the esoteric significance of the Paulama, Paushya and Astika Parvas is fully amplified in the Annusāshana Parva in the discourse cited above.

The genealogy of the line of Bhrigu and certain incidents connected with the abduction of his alleged wife Paulama may be traced to a very early story in the Rig Veda (Mandala I, Sukta 60) and these are again treated in the Vana Parva in a much more trustworthy and reliable manner than is found described in the Paulama Parva. Bhrigu's connection with the Bharata Samhita may be clearly found in Santi Parva, Vritra Gita, Chapter 278, 279 onward.

It is interesting to quote here the views of an European scholar, Kasten Ronnow, in his article "Visvarupa" in the "Indian Studies" presented to the Sanskrit Professor Edward James Rapson, in the University of Cambridge —

"As far as I can see—and I shall give some reasons, for my opinion presently—Visvarupa was originally a serpent deity closely connected with a "pre vedic"

that the serpent demon was thought of as 'possessing all forms' Visvarupa, according to my humble opinion, can mean nothing but 'presiding over, procreating the whole animal creation, all animal shapes''

It will certainly furnish one with a clue to Narayana lying on the body of snake Vasuki with the goddess Lakshmi at his feet in the vast ocean of deluge, meditating the creation of the world

The Bharata Samhita is the book of Ancient Indian Nations, as the very name implies. It records not the possessions nor accounts of the past rulers as history does, but elucidates the treasures of heaven acquired by the sages of Ancient India, whose footprints in the sands of time have been the guide and gospel of religion for realising the great Creator of the world and the way to approach Him, to hold communion with Him, so that peace, happiness and joy may reign through devotion, faith, wisdom and love. It enunciates the immortality of the soul and immortality of the man who can successfully make union with the Omnipotent and the Universal soul presiding over the destiny of creation and its destruction.

This was sought to be impressed upon the minds of the public by examples emanating from the poetic inspirations of Valmiki and Veda-Vyasa in accordance with the growing demand of the ages. The philosophy of love, religion and wisdom became the theme of the Indian, Epics rather than the history of events or chronology of famous kings who ruled the earth. The Indian Epics deal with the spiritual world.

ANCIENT EDUCATION

The Indian history that we read is a history of past events but records what education was actually done and modelled the ideals for society in the physical and spiritual worlds. The world is not a collection of dead ideas but a living organism living side by side with moderns and the future generations. The world is something more than a mere material existence. It reveals Him in himself and in all that He creates. The study of philosophy and religion is so very essential. The study of the past is my knowledge and the study of the future is my wisdom. The two sides of the question will always be considered and the real man is created.

In ancient India, the father was responsible for the education of his children. The father was the teacher, the father was the priest, who did the best to give his children the best education, traditions and practical training, while the mother was the teacher of the children's manners required in the life of the family. The father's taught according to the tradition of the father. The father did not learn what did not interest him. The father was the master of the parents. The ancient sages took care of their children as well as bodily exercises with the object of developing the character of true gentlemen. Thus they made the survivors of the savage world into moral and religious beings. Honesty, truthfulness and morality the students learnt in Vedic schools. The son of Bhisma learnt his lesson under Bhrigu, though his own father was as capable of teaching him.

There was no separate arrangement for the education of the children of kings. They learnt their lessons side by side with the sons of plebeians and patricians. It is thus that Drona and Drupada learnt their lessons together and formed a close friendship. All were then trained morally and spiritually. There was one supreme idea in education—that the top of the ladder could only be reached by qualifications and by putting into practice what one learnt, and not through wealth or descent.

To earn money and enjoy luxury were not the sole aim of the rising generation. Fame and spiritual salvation were then the be-all and end-all of existence. The caste system, which made Sudras a race of donkeys to carry on their backs the landlords (kings), teachers (priests and sages) and capitalists or business managers (Vyasas) was not there. It was the

age of selfishness which ushered in the caste system and civilisation or education, when everybody tried to do as little as possible and to grow rich at the expense of others' labour. The middle class grew rich by trade through the products of the working class, paying them barely the cost of production. The propertied class lived as luxuriously as possible, maintaining the priests and sages, the great teachers of the day, at the expense of all classes under their rule, hunting and waging war with neighbours to deprive them of their possessions, their wealth or their daughters. The religion of the caste system was eventually a virtue of dollars. The Kshatriyas and Vyasas were the honoured twice-born men who had to be waited upon by Brahmans, the most highly honoured servile politicians who acted as teachers, priests, ministers, doctors, minstrels and authors of the day.

In the organised body of men, professional and business men carried the propertied people on their backs and were sometimes kicked and disgraced. The great Epics furnish such examples. King Nahusa, father of Yayati, is said to have kicked the great sage Agastya and a Brahman of rigid vows, Kasyap by name, was thrown down by the rash driving of a proud rich Vaisya, whom King Indira did not punish but solaced the lame Brahman with good advice. 'Discretion is the better part of valour' was the lesson read by him. Bali, Prahlada, Nomuchi and Manuki succeeded in gaining happiness in following the wise motto referred to above when they were deprived of their property*. The dignity of a Brahman among men was said to be much coveted. The great Indra read the Brahmana a good lesson—the folly of being idle and depending on others in spite of all his great learning. God blessed him with hands, and he must use them to be successful. He impressed on him not to waste his valuable life and commit suicide out of cupidity. He admonished him to be contented and explained that the caste system was introduced into the country by force. For it is said by him.—

"Creatures that have hands, forsooth, become strong and acquire riches. Men are forced by men to become servants, and are repeatedly afflicted with death, imprisonment, and other punishments. Although such is their condition yet even they laugh and sport and become merry. Although gifted with strength of arms, knowledge and great energy of mind, others again, follow censurable, sinful, and miserable callings. They try to change such professions to better ones, but then they are fettered by their pristine deeds and by the force of Destiny. The vilest man of the Pukkasa or the Chandala orders never wishes to renounce his life. He is quite satisfied with his birth. Mark the illusion in it."†

To root out sinful desires and to train the mind by sterner discipline was the principle of education in Ancient India. Through want man

* The Mahabharata, Shanti Parva, Chapter CLXXX

† The Mahabharata, Shanti Parva, Chapter CLXXX, verses 34-35

becomes heret. Poverty, looked on as a great disgrace, urges man both to do and suffer everything, that he may escape from it. It leads one away from the path of virtue that directs one upward to heaven. What are laws without public virtues to enforce and record them on the public? The Indian Epics did this important service where tombs were not raised to praise the worthies after their deaths. The power of inspiring principles of goodness depends upon the bringing up, honourably and properly, of children. It is for this reason that the great Epic begins first with the system of education in Ancient India, which has as much connection as the plot itself. This is not realised by the great Western scholars who declared the Pausya and Poulama Parvas quite outside the scope of the great Epic. The great Shakespeare in one of his sonnets says —

Not marble nor the gilded monuments
Of princes shall outlive this powerful rhyme.

It is thus we find with the later development of culture, that the great heroes are ingrained in the hearts of Indians according to their own tastes and inclinations. To some Durjodhana and Karna appeal more than Yudhisthira and Arjuna, and to others only Krishna (Sri Krishna) and Krishna (Draupadi) the ideal God and the ideal princess are worthy of consideration. But to the imaginative, Bhishma and Drona alone are considered great and invincible. In the lines of Milton —

All power
I give thee reign for ever and assume
The merits — (Paradise Lost, III 317)

But alas, theirs was not lasting possession which they could gain by the use of arms like Parasurama. They fought for the justness of the cause and died in despair—a great incentive to dying with the honour which was their due; and the poet gave them this in full measure. But as with Yudhisthira, Nature has placed nothing so high that virtue cannot reach it.

Thus the Epics, by contrasting the ages of Kasyapa and Drona, indicate the ennobling character of the education of kings and priests. For this purpose the Pausya and Poulama Parvas are indispensable.

Death levels all things, but virtue it cannot touch. The excessive fury fails in its object, the joy of the wicked does not last long. Such was the case with the Kurus and their allies. The eyes and footsteps of the master are the most salutary to the living, and that actually was the task imposed upon the great ideal god Krishna, who was present in the great Epic as the master of the just side, the Pandavas and the much persecuted Lakshmi Draupadi, who belonged to nobody alone but to the just and wise, and thus she was the consort of Yudhisthira. As

leaves in a tree live only to enjoy love and join in mutual love with one another, so Draupadi is represented as the sustaining power of the Pandavas, to comfort them in their miseries and not to make them blind with envy or passion. The most important function she was made to perform was that of housewife of the distressed Pandava brothers. Practice and experience are of the greatest moment in the arts of love and chastity. The great Epic demonstrates it beautifully in the lesson Draupadi gives to the wife of Krishna in Bana Parva—not yet appreciated by any of the European scholars or students of the great Epic—for the most important task of a housewife is to know what is to be done according to the oft changing circumstances in the life of man.

Age is after all but the shadow of death. Work, not idleness, leads one to enjoyment. Noble sons do not always depend on lineage so much as upon merit and culture. True, special features and characteristics are found in families through many generations, and the sentiment of ancestry is only natural and visible in the higher races of man, and in a way has contributed in no small degree to the stability of kingdoms and the affections of a people for a king. Hereditary character is sometimes transmitted in noble families and kings as well as a strong family likeness. Moral and intellectual qualities are likewise transmissible, though it may depend upon circumstances and education to develop them in successive generations. But, after all, there are great men in all ages who are of all ranks and classes. The light of genius flashes out suddenly in an undistinguished family and a name rings through the world and may live through all time or may die with him, and the family sink back into obscurity if there is no successor to carry on.

The family name is respected when the glory descends from father to son and continues on. The Ikshvaks, Maithilis, Kurus, Panhalas and Yadavas, Pandavas and Bharatas are such family names of ancient India. Some families claim that their ancestors were either ancient families of the place they ruled or had come in with the conquest of the place. The Pandavas and Yadavas were distinguished as they founded an Empire with the labour of conquest and as the fruit of chivalry and wisdom, whereas the others came to their thrones by heredity and right title of lineage. In modern times it has been found that the greatest conquerors of the world sprang from the governing classes, from the ancient families or from the aristocratic order, and the distinct order of men called Kshatriya in India might have been formed with those men who were chivalrous and meritorious. Sometimes, jealous of the power of others or suffering from indignities and injustices, men have raised themselves from the middle or lower

rank, to become great heroes, statesmen, administrators and victors. Honours are well divided among all classes of men, but in India it became the monopoly of certain sections, and the four divisions of the caste system were crystallised.

The Mahabharata speaks of a certain amount of toleration, but the Ramayana shows bigotry of the worst type when the hero Rama beheaded with his own hands a Sudra ascetic. The same may equally apply to the example of chastity. Sita, in spite of the fire ordeal and positive proof of good conduct, was exiled for the sake of idle talk amongst the low and uneducated class of subjects to keep intact the high ideal of chastity from any taint of criticism whereas Draupadi was publicly declared, for state purposes, as the wife of the five Pandavas. Persecuted openly by the Kurus, yet she was honoured and loved as the beau-ideal of chastity, worthy of being declared the Empress of India in the Rajasuya and Ashvamedha Yajnas of Yudhishtira. In Rama's Ashvamedha sacrifice a golden image of Sita was used. Could there be any better proof of her being the accepted ideal princess and Empress of India for whom Indians as a body feel proud and great? There is the individuality in the character of Draupadi as an example of chastity, and so it is with Kunti and other women, whose names even now are uttered by pious orthodox Hindus, male and female every morning to drive away the sin of thought and action. They are not conventional like Sabinri, Sita, Damayanti, Arundhati, etc. Technical and artistic skill as well as certain tendencies of constitution and temperament in male and female are more or less hereditary. They are marked with colour, texture, size, formation, strength, acumen and energy with the spirit of life in a family, which at last made the caste system descend as a hereditary distinction. Any usurper was guilty of a very grave offence, and to make an example of it the great hero Rama himself performed the part of an executioner. This, above all, gives the date of the Ramayana later than the Mahabharata as well as the employment of domesticated monkeys, etc., as the important functionaries of war.

Pascal's grand theory or formula is of recent date compared with that of old, that the chief men claimed descent either from gods or giants. It is found in every nation of the world and is not peculiar to the Hindus. The scriptures give many lines of genealogy, the Arabs believe in it. The example of Abdel Kader is well-known. "Take a thorny shrub and pour rose-water over it for a whole year, yet it will produce nothing but thorns, but take a date-tree and leave it without water in the most barren ground and it will still bring forth an abundance of luscious fruit." Plutarch describes the descent of his hero

Alexander as being from Hercules Caesar said "There is in every great family the sanctity of kings, who are the rulers of men, and the majesty of the gods, who are the rulers of kings" The Indian Epics did nothing wrong in ascribing in like manner divine origin to their heroes and associating the king of Gods with them. The demands of fortune in its most adverse turn demanded the dowry of a daughter to the five Pandava Princes to weld them into one whole. The goddess of prosperity, Draupadi, is clearly mentioned and implied in the Mahabharata, for she crowned the wise man whose single pride was honesty and truth and who had by his side the strength of Bhima, the love of Arjuna, the two hands so very powerful of the true wisdom in the world. The foresight and power of beauty in the twins are mere corollaries of virtue and obedience.

No fact can be better ascertained than this, that the circumstances which surrounded and operated upon the vicissitudes of the life the Pandavas underwent were eased by the fact that they had by their side the cultured, beautiful housewife who ministered wise counsel with unselfish loving affection to govern them. Man may direct intellect, but woman directs the heart. The sacrifices that Draupadi made are little known unless discovered in the words of Kunti. She preferred to be with her husband and his brothers, to look after their comforts and watch that their miseries did not make them deviate from their course. This was more important than her own comforts or those of her child. In the severest trials of the great heroes she watched and attended them and led them to become united in the great purpose of establishing an empire of justice and equity in place of tyranny. The great poet justly exposes the unjust persecutions of tyranny on the goddess of prosperity in the dice hall, and it was she who rescued the Pandavas from the utter ignominy of slavery.

The birthplace of Pururaba is said to be on the mountain Puru, where Bhrigu used to be engaged in religious austerities, and for that the place was called Bhrigu Tunga. That was the place where Yudhishthira was instructed by Parasurama, at Varanvata by Vyasa, on the bank of Kalmashi by Bhrigu, on the Anjana mountain by Asita*. The Bidura describes the different attributes of the Pandavas, which king Dhritarastra admitted as follows when addressing Yudhishthira in open court —

"In you is virtue, in Arjuna is patience, and in Bhimasena is prowess. And in those foremost of men, the twins (Nakula and Sahadeva), are pure reverence and service to superiors."

Principally we not in the justice who would they follow what or upon what day of war. She would be the first woman to be a living issue to the world to the duty and love.

[illegible]

Phra Prayag, the place of the great annual fair, was in
evidence, and the great fair was held by a large
Phra Prayag, the place of the great annual fair, was in
evidence, and the great fair was held by a large
Phra Prayag, the place of the great annual fair, was in
evidence, and the great fair was held by a large

1) Pritha (the religious book-mention of six kinds of sons who are both heirs and kinsmen and six kinds more who are neither but kinsmen. I shall speak of them later to me. They are: 1. Aushadha (the son begotten on one's own wife by his own wife). 2. Pritha (the son begotten on one's own wife by an accomplished person). 3. Parikrita (the son begotten on one's wife by a man for pecuniary considerations). 4. Pannarava (the son begotten on one's wife after her husband's death). 5. Kautu (the son born in maidenhood). 6. Kunda (the son born of a woman who had intercourse with four or five). 7. Datta (the son given by another). 8. Krita (the son bought from another). 9. Upakrita (the son coming to one out of gratitude). 10. Vayag (Upagata) (the son coming to give himself away). 11. Shada (the son born of a pregnant bride). 12. Shina (Indhrita) (the son born of a wife of a lower cast). On the future of getting offspring of the first class, the mother should try to get the offspring of the next class and so on. At the time of emergency (failure of offspring), men raise up sons by their accomplished

younger brothers. O Pritha, the self-created Manu has said that men, failing to obtain a son of their own, might raise up excellent virtue giving sons by others'."

Epic literature speaks of many forms of marriage, but confines itself to one form called *Swayambhara*, with which the Epic heroes were introduced in the worldly entrance of life. In the *Swayambhara* form of marriage the girl was given to the successful competitor and performer of a named skilful feat in arms or left entirely to the choice of the advanced, cultured bride from the assembled princes of India, irrespective of caste, creed or colour. This is the most cosmopolitan form of marriage, where preference was given to merit or freedom was given to the girl, who was considered quite fit to choose the best partner of life after knowing the qualities of each of the suitors present in the assembly. It was then a question of practical public demonstration of merit, learning, skill and ability of the princes and princesses of India, who liked to be united in the marriage bond and not merely accept a political caste union which smelt of rank and heredity.

There were the sages who tested the capacities of youths before they were trained and followed a distinct profession, as is mentioned in the *Pousya Parva*. The caste system eventually became a question of merit and profession. People were then admitted into any class of profession after due test or examination. Success in life depended upon the cultural education of a man and a woman. The public were interested in a life of usefulness, and success in their ideals could make the nation materially and spiritually great. They believed that peace and prosperity depended more upon spiritual progress than upon mere material success. The caste system was thus eventually crystallised on the basis of religion and profession.

INDO-ARYAN WORSHIP.

The Indian Veda is universally held to be the most ancient record of the origin and progress of Indo-Aryan worship. It is held in the highest esteem by the Hindus of India as being a revelation from the great creator of the universe. Its internal evidence demolishes the theory of emigration from West to East. The language in which the ancient Vedic hymns were composed does not belong to any place in the West, but it still lingers as the language of India and is still current in the mouths of Indians. Besides, these Vedic hymns with the names of the Gods and their worshippers give the surest indication of the place of their conception.

The primitive Aryan, living in the midst of naked nature, was forced to read Nature by observation and meditation. Necessity is the mother of invention, and the primitive Aryans lived in caves and were provided with natural instincts. They learnt the languages of birds and beasts and were struck with their intelligence, love and gratitude. The primitive Aryan learnt many things from observation of the animal life and natural phenomena around him. The old bird and animal tales of India recorded in the *Epics* testify to the truth of this. The illiterate peasants and boatmen can even now read from the clouds above or from the heart in the water of the river as to when rain will fall.

The primitive Aryan mind in the process of development found that beneficent Nature had provided everything for the comfort of created beings and was struck with awe when it witnessed the savage fury with which flood, fire, wind, thunder, etc., destroyed everything and caused misery and death. This is the genesis of human worship in India and elsewhere. The ancient people believed that Gods could work miracles and turn the course of Nature for the benefit of their faithful worshippers. It is for this they offered whatever they held dear to appease the wrath of the presiding deities of Nature and to propitiate them. This sacrifice is the keynote of the first human worship and prayer recorded in the Veda.

With the decadence of this school of thought the spirit of the departed was deified along with the spirit which every natural object possessed. The worship of the spirit of the departed ancestor was called "*Pitriyajna*", and the worship of the guardian spirits of natural phenomena in Indra, Varuna, Sun, Moon, Rudra, Yama, etc., was called "*Devayajna*". The materialistic *Pasupat* cult (Rudra worship) brought

seven Rishis of India are believed to have been translated into seven planetary bodies. They were all Vedic Rishis worshipped in the Pouranic world.

Like the earth, heaven too is a place of trial, according to ancient Hindu ideas. King Nahusa went to heaven, but as soon as he failed to restrain his senses he was hurled back to earth and was transformed into a snake. The idea of a devil being transformed into a snake is world-wide. The Hindus worship the God Narayana as lying over the snake, while the Christians have it thrown down from heaven.

The Gods of Heaven, Earth, Sea, Fire, Air and Sky were once made in plastic form and with poetic beauty. Historical events gave an impulse and impetus to personification of intellectual and moral qualities, and every great event, such as acquisition of new territories or victory over rivals, entailed worship of the Gods and feasting of the priest who laid the foundation of the law of rituals. Thus religious as well as political institutions emanated from the kings and their high priests. In this way a number of deities arose to preside over birth, growth and prevention of disasters and diseases in Ancient India, but few of them survived when philosophers directed their assault against religious superstitions and degenerate forms of mysticism.

Then a complete change took place at the sacrifices of the great god, Vishnu, whose form, after the killing of the Asuras, Madhu and Kaitava, was represented as having the head of a horse. This is the 'Hayagriba Upakhayan' mentioned in the Taittiriya Aranyaka, Panchavimsa Brahmana and in the Mahabharata. This was the end of the Hindu Triad worship and the beginning of the worship of the meditative and impartial Narayana, with which the Bharata Samhita, the source of the two Indian Epics, begins in the Narayana section of the Mahabharata. It ultimately came to be inculcated that a Brahmin's duties and salvation did not lie in the way of sacrifice, but in that of a rigid course of moral life, by practice of Pranayam and other religious austerities.

Ancestor worship in its widest sense did not mean only the worship of the dead ancestors, but included the living parents too. The religion of the early Indo-Aryans as well as of many other people arise out of the belief that the performance of a certain act enjoined by the books of religion yields some definite merit. That the Aryans in India rose to a higher spiritual plane through the cult of Narayana has been already shown, and this was propounded by the Bharata Samhita and the Uttarakanda of the Ramayana. But in the course of the change from a materialistic to a renunciatory religion, the same stories were used with large modifications, both in substance as well as in form. If this is

understood clearly there will be no difficulty in tracing the development of the Epic themes from their earliest original versions, some of which are preserved in the Uttarakāṇḍa of the Rāmāyana and Bhārata Samhita of the Mahābhārata and Purāṇas.

The stories which centre round ancestor worship are many and varied, and range from the grotesque to the sublime. The story of Sankha and Likhita, sons of Yagisavya, to whom are assigned the authorship of two Samhitas, has an exclusive interest unconnected with the other stories which became later on part of the Epic legends. Sankha and Likhita were two great Rishi brothers, sons of Yagisavya, who lived on the bank of Vahuka river at some distance from each other. Once upon a time the Rishi Likhita called on his elder brother Sankha, but at the time his brother was away. Being hungry he plucked some fruit from the trees of his Ashrama (hermitage) and ate them. When Sankha came he found his brother eating the fruits from his trees and accused him of theft, and sent him to the king to receive punishment at his hands. The king thought that it was a trifling offence and did not want to punish him, but on Likhita insisting on receiving punishment according to the laws of the realm, the king had no other alternative but to order his two hands to be cut off as a punishment for theft. Then Likhita came back to his elder brother, who advised him to make offerings to his ancestors, the great Rishis, and the gods. Through the favours of his ancestors Likhita got back his two hands. The story ends with the moral, which is given in this connection, that whoever discharges his duties enters into a spirit of Holy Communion with his ancestors. The king who fulfils his manifold duties receives the approbation of his ancestors and becomes successful (Santi Parva, Chapter 231). The story of the matricide of Parashu-Rama, who had lost his glory through his humiliation at the hand of Ikshvaku Rama, got back his old vigour by making offerings to his ancestors at the water of the river Badhu Sara (Bana Parva, Chapter 99, and also referred to in Poulama Parva).

The Mahābhārata explains that the meaning of offering oblation to the dead is nothing but the worship of the God Narayana (Shanti Parva, Chapter CCCXLVI).

"Narada said —It is from that Supreme Deity that Brahma, the grandfather of all the worlds, sprang in days of yore. That Brahma, otherwise called Prameshtha filled with cheerfulness caused my father (Daksha) to come into being. I was the son of Brahma, created before all others, by his will. O righteous and illustrious one, I am performing these rites in honour of the departed manes for the sake of Narayana and according to those ordinances that have been ordained by himself. The illustrious Narayana is the father, mother and grandfather. In all sacrifices performed in honour of the departed manes, it is that Lord of the universe who is worshipped. On one occasion, the gods, who were father, taught their children the Shrutis. Having lost their knowledge of the Shrutis, the fathers had to acquire it

again from those sons to whom they had communicated it. On account of this incident, the sons, who had thus to communicate the Mantras to their fathers, acquired the status of fathers. Forsooth, what the gods did on that occasion is well known to you two. Sons and fathers had thus to adore each other. Having first spread some blades of Kusha grass the gods and the departed manes placed three funeral cakes thereon and thus adored each other. I wish to know, however, the reason why the departed manes in days of yore acquired the name of Pindas *"

The inter-relation of the great Epic and the institutes of Manu is clear. The principal ancient methods of salvation were Devayajna and Pitruyajna. The mythology behind the Pitruyajna is given in the same chapter in the mouth of the god Narayana as follows —

"Nara and Narayana said —The earth, in days of yore, with her belt of seas, disappeared from view. Govinda, taking the form of a gigantic boar, raised her up. Having replaced the earth in her former position, that foremost of Purushas, his body smeared with water and mud, began to do what was necessary for the world and its inhabitants. When the Sun reached the meridian, and the hour, therefore, came for saying the midday prayers, the powerful Lord, suddenly shaking off three balls of mud from his tusk, placed them upon the Earth, O Narada, having previously spread thereon certain blades of grass. The powerful Vishnu dedicated those balls of mud to his own self, according to the rites laid down in the eternal ordinance. Regarding the three balls of mud that the powerful Lord had shaken off from his tusks as funeral cakes, he then, with sesame seeds that arose from the heat of his own body, himself performed the rite of dedication, sitting with face turned towards the East. That foremost of gods then, moved by the desire of establishing rules of conduct for the inhabitants of the three worlds, said these words. Vrishakapi said:—I am the Creator of the worlds. I am determined to create those that are to be called departed manes.—Saying these words, he began to think of those high ordinances that should regulate the rites to be performed in honour of the departed manes. While thus doing, he beheld that the three balls of mud, shaken off his tusk, had fallen towards the south. He then said to himself,—These balls, shaken off my tusk, have fallen on the Earth towards the south of her surface. Led by this, I declare that these should be known henceforth by the name of departed manes. Let these three that are of no particular shape, and that are only round, come to be considered as Pitris in the world. Thus do I create the eternal Pitris. I am the father, the grandfather and the great grandfather and I should be considered as living in these three Pindas. There is no one that is superior to me. Who is there whom I myself, may adore with rites? Who, again, is my father in the universe? I myself am my grandfather. I am, indeed, the grandfather and the father, I am the one cause. Having said these words, that God of Gods, viz. He called Vrishakapi, offered those funeral cakes, O learned Brahmana, on the breast of the Varaha mountains, with elaborate rites. By those rites he adored his own self, and having finished the adoration, disappeared there and then. Hence the Pitris are called Pinda. This is the root of the designation. According to the words given vent to by Vrishakapi at that time, the Pitris receive the worship offered by all. They who celebrate sacrifices in honour of and adore the departed manes, the gods, the preceptor or other reverend senior, guests arrived at the house, kine, superior Brahmanas, the goddess Earth, and their mothers, in thought, word, and deed, are said to adore and sacrifice to Vishnu himself. Entering the bodies of all existent creatures, the illustrious Lord is the Soul of all things. Unaffected by happiness or misery, his attitude towards all is equal. Gifted

* The Mbh. Shantī Parva, Chapter CCCXLVI, pp 570—571, verses 5—11.

with greatness and of great soul, Narayana had been said to be the soul of all things in the Universe *

The celestial Rishi Narada found Narayana in Sveta-dvipa † The white Narayana and white island where the Rishi Narada found him give good grounds to conclude that the name Sveta-dvipa owed its origin more to the place being reputed to have been the abode of the White Narayana in Satya Yuga, the first cycle of time, than anything else. For it is said in the Annus-ashana Parva that the name of Sveta-dvipa owed its origin in all probability to the Royal Sage Sveta, who became famous by killing Andhaka. Sveta was a follower of the Pasupati cult, but when he was perhaps converted to the Narayana cult he may have gone to Sveta Island. Siva heard from Brahma all about Narayana, called the Tramiaka-Brahma discourse in Santi Parva, Chapter 350-351. Nor is this all. There is the most interesting discourse between the two great heroes of the Ramayana and the Mahabharata, Hanumana and Bhima, who were said to be bretheren, in Bana Parva, Chapter 168. Hanumana enlightened Bhima about the important change of colours of Narayana with different cycles of time and the true implication of Narayana worship. The interesting portions bearing on the subject are given below —

"O child, in the Krita Yuga there were no celestials, no Danavas, no Gandharvas, no Yakshas, no Rakshasas, and no Nagas. There was neither buying nor selling. The Sama, the Rich, the Yaya (Velas) did not exist. There was no manual labour. The necessities of life were procured only by thinking for them. The only Dharma was then renunciation. In that Yuga there was neither disease nor the decay of the senses. There was no ther malice, nor pride, nor jealousy, nor discord, nor ill will, nor cunningness, nor fear nor misery nor envy, nor covetousness. For this reason, even that chief refuge of all Yugas, the supreme Brahma, was attainable to all. The white cloth wearing Narayana (also was the soul of all creatures)

One uniform Soul was the object of their meditation, there was but one religion and one ordinance. Though they had different characters, they followed one Veda, and they had one religion. According to the divisions of time, they led the four modes of life without aiming at any object. Thus they obtained (final) emancipation."

"Now hear from me all about the Treta Yuga, in which sacrifices were introduced (in the world). (In this age) virtue decreased by a quarter and Narayana assumed a red colour. Men practised truth and devoted themselves to religion and religious rites. Thus sacrifices were introduced, and many religious rites came to be performed. In the Treta Yuga men began to devise to attain an object and they attained to it by performing (religious) acts and (giving away) gifts. Men never deviated from virtue, and they were always engaged in asceticism and the bestowal of gifts. The four orders were devoted to their respective duties and they performed (religious) rites. Such were the men in the Treta Yuga

* The Mbh Chapter CCCXLVI, page 370, Shanti Parva, Verses 12-23

† The Mbh Chapter 343, Shanti Parva

"In the Dwapara Yuga virtue decreased by half, Vishnu assumed a yellow colour, and the Vedas became divided into four parts. Then some learnt all the four Vedas, some again only three, some two, and some did not know even the Rik. The Sastras having been thus divided, (religious) acts also (naturally) multiplied. Mostly influenced by passion, men engaged in asceticism and gifts. As men had no capacity to study the entire Veda, it came to be divided into several parts. And as the intellect (of men) deteriorated, few were devoted to truth. When men fall off from truth, they became subject to various diseases,—lust overtakes men and natural calamities fall on them. Being affected by these, some then betake to asceticism. Others perform sacrifices with the desire of enjoying worldly luxuries or of obtaining heaven (and its pleasure). O son of Kunti, thus in the Dwapara age men became degenerated on account of their impiety.

"In the Kali Yuga only one quarter of virtue remains. When this age appears, Keshava (Vishnu) assumes a black colour. The Vedas, the Institutes, the virtue, the sacrifices, and religious observances all fall into disuse. Then it (excessive rain), drought, rats, locusts, birds and king diseases, lassitude, anger, deformities, natural calamities, anguish and fear of famine take possession of the world. As this Yuga passes on, virtue becomes daily weaker. As virtue becomes weak, all creatures degenerate, and as creatures degenerate, their nature also undergoes deterioration. The religious acts performed at this waning of the Yuga produce contrary effects. Even those who live for several Yugas must conform to their changes."

The Indo-Aryan form of worship through sacrifices assumed a pseudo-political character with the kings of India and their priests when the sacrifices began to be undertaken more for the destruction of enemies or for the attainment of specific temporal success than for the spiritual amelioration of Hindu Society or for the spiritual emancipation of the individual performers.

The implication of the Astika Parva and its connection with previous Parvas are not hard to find. The moral and spiritual teachings that converge round King Janmejaya's snake sacrifice form the bedrock of the present Mahabharata. The performance of this Yajna was not completed. The cruel purpose for which it was undertaken was shown in its true colours by the Rishi Astika when he asked from the king the boon which implied the abandonment of the objective of the sacrifice. The word Astika means a theist. The obvious interpretation of this abandonment of the snake sacrifice through Astika would be that the cruel ceremonial rituals involving sacrifices of animals or extermination of Nagas or enemies were then subordinated to higher ethical and spiritual conceptions embodied in the Pancha Ratra instituted by Narada and the Narayana cult. Similar is the implication of the result of Parasurama's Aswamedha sacrifice, which he had performed after decimating the Kshatriya race and in which, on his making a gift of the Earth as the sacrificial fee to the Rishi Kasyapa, the latter banished him to the Southern Ocean or the Mahendra Mountain in Orissa by asking him to retire from the earth which he had given away.

It is quite evident from even a superficial perusal of the Mahabharata that a great change was coming over the earlier ritualistic sacrifices. Greater stress was laid on the performance of the moral duties of the respective caste divisions of the Aryans. The life of the Brahmin consisted of a continuous series of sacrifices through which he must seek salvation. The great sacrifices, such as Ashvamedha, Rajasuya and others, which were performed by various kings at long intervals, could not be the means of salvation and expiation as was at first sought to be inculcated, but their important place in the social and political life of the people was recognised. Cruel practices connected with them were under-valued and forbidden. From this point of view one sees a consistent connection between the account of the uncompleted snake sacrifice of Janmejaya and the teachings of Bidura and Sanat Sujata in Udyoga Parva*, where the duties of the Brahmins as leading to their complete bliss in the hereafter are mentioned. Most of them relate to their daily avocations. Sanat Sujata, the teacher of Narada, emphasises the distinction between death and immortality and explains the means by which immortality can be attained. The Brahmin is defined as a person who, although he lives amongst relatives, remains a stranger to them in respect of his actions. This certainly refers to his contemplations and Niskama Dharma.

The view that the Mahabharata was a later development of the Bharata Samhita is universally held and is also borne out by the text of the Mahabharata. Professor Winternitz, who could not see the inter-connection between the different strata of the Mahabharata, thinks that Pausya Parva (Mahabharata I, 3), the Markendeya section of the Vana Parva and the Narayana section of Shanti Parva lie outside the scope of the Epic proper, and disagrees with Professor Oldenberg, who sees in them an earlier stage of Epic poetry. If the sacrificial origin of the Bharata Samhita was properly understood by students of the Mahabharata, they would have a sure grasp of the inter-relation between the different themes of the Mahabharata and the gradual development of the Epic.

The sacrifice, which was an important educational institution, formed an essential feature of Indo-Aryan life. It focussed the activities and knowledge derived from the various deeds performed by the good and the wise. A man, according to this view, has to lead a life of activity, and unless he attains wisdom and true knowledge by actions, according to the Shastric injunctions, he cannot attain bliss and

* Udyoga Parva, Chapters 49 and 50

happiness From what has been said already, it will be quite clear that the sacrifice was the pivot of the Bharata Samhita and that whatever pertained to the performance of the Yajna belonged to the earliest stratum of the Mahabharata.

The natural forces which the early Aryans worshipped consisted of five elements—Earth, Water, Fire, Wind and Sky Of these Fire came to be regarded by them as the most powerful, whose favour they sought to win or whose wrath they tried to avert by offering sacrifices of objects that were dear to them In this way the sacrifices had come to occupy a very important place among the religious institutions of the Indo-Aryan race. These sacrifices were of three kinds, the Brahma Yajna, in which the Vedic Sandhya Gayatri was recited thrice daily by the Brahmins; the sacrifices connected with the phases of the moon for conferring bliss on the ancestors, and propitiating gods and sages, etc; and lastly, the Aswamedha and Raja-Suya sacrifices by kings, which stood on an altogether different footing

“Deva” was at first a generic term to convey the meaning of what was good, great and bright, and “Asura” meant selfish and powerful. The sacrifices were at first undertaken to support the Devas against the Asuras The sacrifices were in the nature of gratification to God, and the priests helped the worshipper in every possible way to unite the general public and their heads for making common cause against the evil-doers The development of the idea of godhead and its different stages are not merely theoretical postulates but historical realities The different levels of religious thought in India had been reached in very early Vedic times by different classes of the same society. The Upanishad stood against the idea of godhead propounded by the Vedic Rishis in their hymns and sacrifices, and spoke of God as simply unknowable There is no predicate in human language which can convey and represent the true idea of God, and Upanishad defined Him with the words “Neti” “Neti” (“Not this, “Not this”) It has found an echo in the words of the Maxims of Tyre —

“Let men know all that is divine, let them know it only ”*

Indians believe in the five elements of Nature Samkhya philosophy ascribes the creation of these five elements to the self-consciousness of the Creator Sky is the receptacle of wind and sound, fire is generated by wind, from fire water flows from the sky, and from water the earth was created The Sun and the Moon shine day and night and are considered to be the most important creators of earth. The Ancient Indo-Aryan race worshipped them and the kings of India traced their lineage from them, which was in fact the two

* “Let men only know, let them only love, let them only remember the Divine,”

systems of worship Devayajna and Pitruyajna. This is the most important theogonic process of Indo-Aryan worship of the gods.

The whole of the Veda inculcates the worship of single gods and the great Western Vedic scholar, Professor Max Muller, divides Vedic worship into three states: Henotheistic, Polytheistic and Monotheistic. Veda describes the fight between Vasistha and Visvamitra and their disciples. Vasistha, with the army of king Sudas, conquered the ten kings who crossed the five rivers of India. It proves two important things, firstly that Vasistha stopped the immigration of the West, and secondly the spiritual adviser and performer of sacrifices of a king followed him on the battlefield to give necessary advice how to fight and to help the king to win success at the opportune moment, perhaps not seen by the king himself. Vedic Gods were invoked with the names of priests and the priests were worshipped almost like gods, for the priests, versed in the mysteries and incantations of the Atharva Veda, often displayed great occult powers and worked miracles for their disciples.

"Vasistha and Visvamitra, who with their families have both been the Purohitas of king Sudas, did more for the king than chanting hymns to implore the aid of their gods. The importance of their office is best shown by the violent contest which these two families of the Vasisthas and Visvamitras carried on, in order to secure for themselves the hereditary dignity of Purohita. There was a similar contest between the priests at the court of Asvapati, a descendant of Ikshvaku. He, not satisfied with his four Purohitas, Bṛandhu, Subṛandhu, Srutabandhu and Viprabandhu, who were brothers and belonged to the family of the Gaupyanas, dismissed them, and appointed two new priests (mayavinayau). These new Purohitas, seeing that the Gaupyanas used incantations against the life of king Asvapati, retaliated, and caused by their charms the death of one of them, Subṛandhu. Thereupon the other three brothers composed a song to appease the wrath of the two priests, and to save their own lives. This song and some others connected with the same contest, form part of the 8th Ashṭaka of the Rig-Veda. The very fact of the office of Purohita being hereditary shows that it partook of a political character. It seems to have been so at an early time. In a hymn of the Rig-Veda, I. 916, where Agni is invoked under several priestly names, he is called, Janusha Purohita or Purohita by birth. Cf. I. 107.8. And we find several instances where priests if once employed by a royal family, claim to be employed always. When Janamejaya Parikṣita ventured to perform a sacrifice without the Kasyapas, he was forced by the Asvatthirigas, a family of the Kasyapas, to employ them again. When Visvantara Saushadmana drove away the Syapataras from his sacrifice, he was prevailed upon by Rama Margareya to call them back. All this shows that the priestly office was of great importance in the ancient times of India. The original occupation of the Purohita may simply have been to perform the usual sacrifices, but, with ambitious Brahmins, it soon became a stepping stone to political power*."

"One of the greatest events in the life of Vasistha was the victory which king Sudas achieved under his guidance. But in the Mandala of the Vasisthas, the same event is sometimes alluded to as belonging to the past, and in one of the hymns

* Professor Max Muller's "Ancient Sanskrit Literature", pp. 485-487 and p. 483

ascribed to the same Vasishtha we read. 'Committing our sons and offspring to the same good protection which Iditi, Mitra, and Varuna like guardians, give to Sudas, let us not make our gods angry'

"The original institution of a Purohita, as the spiritual adviser of a king or a chief, need not be regarded as the sign of a far advanced hierarchical system. The position of the Brahmans must have been a peculiar one in India from the very beginning. They appear from the very first as a class of men of higher intellectual power than the rest of the Aryan colonists, and their general position, if at all recognised, could hardly have been different from that of Vasishtha in the camp of Sudas."*

The Brahmin sages, according to the evidence of the Vedas, Puranas and the Epics, were the vanguard of Aryan culture

It is well-known that the co-operation between the Brahmins and Kshatriyas, one having the allegiance of the general public for their learning and character and the other exercising political power over them, was secured at the sacrifices for their mutual benefit. The Asvamedha and Raja-Suya sacrifices were primarily camouflaged political institutions under a religious guise. In them the various princes of India were not called upon to render homage as vassals to one superior overlord, but were merely requested to contribute to the general expenses of the sacrifices. The acknowledgment of the suzerainty of the king intending to perform the horse sacrifice was secured not by an open invasion of the territories of the other kings of India, but merely by making them allow the horse of the sacrifice to pass through their countries unmolested. Only those who had rival pretensions and wanted themselves to celebrate a similar sacrifice challenged the right of the performer by seizing the horse. Thus the horse sacrifice minimised the task of an ambitious ruler aspiring at the overlordship of India, causing as little trouble and bloodshed as possible. Many of the kings contributed willingly to the expenses of the sacrifice considering it also as a meritorious act.

In a Raja-Suya sacrifice kings from various parts of India assembled at the place where it was being performed under the auspices of a ruler belonging to their class. They did not come as the vassals, as will be evident from the speech made by king Sudas at the Raja-Suya sacrifice of Yudhishthira. The successful performer of the sacrifice reaped not only spiritual merit from it, but also an abstract claim to priority among the Rulers of India in the religious sphere. He undertook this ceremony for the expiation of his sins and the propagation of religion at the instance of the Brahmans who were pledged to the support of his cause by the lavish gifts which they obtained from the king. These Brahmans were the natural leaders of society and

*Professor Max Müller's "Ancient Sanskrit Literature" p. 433-34.

their taking part in the sacrifice strengthened the cause of the particular king among the general public of India. Furthermore, after receiving gifts from one king at the Raja-Suya sacrifice, they could not, with any conscience, advise another king or engage themselves to another king for a similar rival sacrifice during the life-time of the previous performer of a sacrifice like the Raja-Suya or Asvamedha.

The Brahmins who flocked to the sacrifice at the invitation of the king did not do so merely for personal reasons. The Vedic hymns were as yet confined to a small class of Brahmins. No one could take part in the sacrifice unless he knew the Vedic hymns by heart with correct pronunciation and reading, and hence the knowledge of these hymns became widespread among the Brahmins. Those who displayed great learning and were renowned for their piety, received titles of distinction at the sacrifices such as Rishi, Muni, Maharshi and Brahmarshi. The gifts which they received were utilised for the support of the great teaching institutions and universities with which they were associated. In these universities, the Vedic hymns and the Vedangas were studied and popularised among the Brahmins. Thus these sacrifices were not only great instruments for the extension of political power by the ambitious Rulers of India, but were the chief means by which the culture of the race was preserved and perpetuated.

It was at these sacrifices that the laws of good conduct or Dharma were promulgated by the Brahmin sages and were enforced by the kings. The spread of Aryan culture in the Aryavarta required such institutions as the sacrifices, which were the distinguishing characteristic of the Indo-Germanic culture as against the idolatrous practices of the aborigines, which it replaced. The institution of sacrifices was developed from this motive. The elaborate rituals which were a part of the ceremony of the sacrifices necessitated the creation of a priestly class, and this class became the exponent of the culture of the Aryan race.

It was realised at an early period of Aryan civilisation in India that the cause of the Aryans could only be upheld in India by close co-operation between Brahmins and Kshatriyas. It is said in the Mahabharata that a dispute took place between Atri and Gautama at the horse sacrifice of king Vainya, when the king was praised as Indra by Atri, to which objection was taken by Gautama, who maintained that the king could not be addressed as such for the epithet 'Indra' could only be applied to the Heavenly King, Indra. The dispute was settled by the divine sage Sanat Kumar, who said

'As (when) fire united with the wind burns down forests, so (when) a Brahman's energy is united with that of a Kshatriya and vice versa, it consumes all enemies.'

"The king is noted for establishing religion and he is the protector of his subjects. He is (like) Indra (a protector of all beings), like Sukra (a propounder of morals), like Brihaspati (an advisor) and (therefore) he is justly styled the ruler of our destiny."

"Is there (therefore) anybody who considers himself absurd worshipping the individual to whom such appellations as *Prajāpati* (the lord of all creatures) *Virata*, Emperor, *Kshatriya*, lord of earth and monarch are applied in praise, etc.?"

It is interesting that the son of Vena received such rich tributes from the great Rishis at the sacrifice while his father was killed for not conforming to Brahmanical ideals and laws. He had incurred their displeasure and therefore was overthrown and killed by the Non-Aryan Nishads and fishermen at the instance of the Rishis. Prithu was the first sovereign of India who performed the *Raja-Suya* sacrifice, at which the controversy between Atri and Gautama, mentioned above, took place. Sukracharya was his priest, Balakhilya and Sarasvata were his ministers, and the great Rishi Garga was his astrologer. The success of his reign was due to the fact that though he was a very powerful ruler who constrained the earth to yield abundance to his subjects, he never transgressed the laws and counsels of the Rishis. It is held that because he protected them from harm (*Kshata*), he became celebrated as the *Kshatriya*, a title which was subsequently transmitted to the whole ruling race of Aryabarta and the very name of the earth (*Prithivi*) owes its origin to him.

The theory on which the performance of a sacrifice was based, apart from its cultural implication, is that prosperity and success in this life and hereafter cannot be secured without energy and without the sacrifice of an object which is very dear to one. The story of Polycrates, tyrant of Samos, throwing away his valuable ring in the sea to appease the wrath of the gods, who do not like mortals to enjoy a course of uninterrupted prosperity, is really a very early form of the superstition which prompted kings to perform sacrifices. It is evident to all those who are acquainted with the growth of ritualism that the sacrifice was not of such an elaborate character at the time of the composition of the Vedic hymns. Sacrifice then meant the sacrifice of a thing or person very dear to the offerer for the purpose of receiving a boon from the gods.

Rishis and priests did not live with their own people in crowded towns, but made their abode in forests, in plains as well as on the hills, where they lived among the aboriginal races of India, by whom they were faithfully served. The fishermen, the hunters, the wood-cutters, the Gandharvas, and Apsaras, and Rakshasas were employed by them as news-agents and even spies, and they brought information to the sages as to what was going on in the country, and in the capital, about the

conduct of the kings towards their subjects and *vice versa*, or if any foreign invasion was likely to take place and so forth. The Brahmin Rishis kept themselves abreast of all up-to-date political information through these aborigines, who had direct dealings with townsmen, the fisherman bringing his fish to sell, the hunter his meat to dispose of and the Gandharvas to entertain by music and dance in which they excelled. They could collect useful information in the course of their business transactions and this they faithfully reported to the Brahmin hermits dwelling in the forests. It is mentioned in the Epics that some of these Rishis knew the art of healing, such as Chayavana, and this furnishes us with a clue to the wide popularity which they enjoyed among the Non-Aryan people with whom they lived.

Now a sacrifice undertaken by the king at the instance of the Brahmins was meant not only to further the interests of the king but also to cement the bond of amity between the Brahmin Rishi and his Non-Aryan adherents. The Non-Aryan races had each their own religion. Some worshipped the snake, some the tree and so on. If in the Vedic sacrifices merely Vedic hymns were chanted, they could have no influence with the illiterate aborigines who had come all the way from their homes at the outskirts of the kingdom to participate in the ceremonies. In fact, the invocation of the Vedic gods alone would antagonise them, for it is well-known that the more backward the community, the more touchy it is with regard to its own beliefs and religious practices. The Brahmin sages were not only the spiritual instructors of the Aryans. They had a larger and wider mission to fulfil. They had taken upon themselves the task of spreading Aryan culture among the vast aboriginal population of India. This could only be done, not by the discarding of their superstitions and religious beliefs but by conserving and using them as the vehicle of instruction, by means of which these races were gradually brought up to the level of the culture of the conquering Aryans.

It was for this reason that out of the ten days of the sacrifice of Asvamedha, no less than six days were devoted to the instruction of the Non-Aryans. Of these Non-Aryans, all were not aborigines or backward people. The Asuras, who were addressed on the seventh day of the sacrifice, had maintained an equal contest with the Devas and were quite a powerful people, but those among them who had submitted to the Aryans were now living by usury like the Jews in mediæval Europe. So successful was the mission of the Brahmins in this respect, that not only did these aboriginal people receive instruction from the Brahmin Rishis but some of them became qualified to be the instructors of the

'The great Vedāntist philosopher who wrote his commentary in 801 A.D. often quotes the Mahābhārata as a Smṛiti and in discussing a verse from Book XII expressly states that Mahābhārata was intended for the religious instruction of those classes who by their position are debarred from studying the Vedas and Vedānta" (Macdonnell's History of Sanskrit Literature, page 249)

But Prof Macdonnell had before him the Tandyā Brahmanas (xv-5), where it is said that the Bharata will always have Vasistha as Purohita, which might either mean a king of that name or men in general. Later on Professor Macdonnell says that the Bharata, though held in high regard by the composers of the Brahmana and set up by them as models of correct conduct, appear to have ceased to represent a political entity, for there are no longer any references to them in that sense, as to the other peoples of the day. Their name, moreover, does not occur in the tribal enumerations of the Aitereya Brahmana.

It has been stated already that no one in Vedic times was debarred because of his origin from studying the Veda. The instance of Kavashī Ailusha has been mentioned in this connection, and the fact that in the performance of the sacrifices where Vedic hymns were uttered non-Aryans were present and were addressed, disproves the later view of the exclusive character of the Vedas. The Bharata Samhita was used for religious instruction of those people who could not study or comprehend the Vedas. The Bharata Samhita was a part of the Vedic ceremonial liturgy and, as such, must be deemed to have been a continuation of Vedic literature.

The Bharata Samhita marks a distinct change in the attitude of the Brahmins and Kshatriyas towards worldly success through religious sacrifices. The Bharata Samhita, having its origin in the institution of the Yajnas, with which it was deeply connected through the instructive and explanatory stories and parables narrated by the priests, had indeed a higher moral and spiritual message.

The great gods, illustrious Rishis, prosperous kings and all inferior beings owe their origin to one great acknowledged creator, Narayana, who shows no special favour to anyone in this universe. The Bharata Samhita, which was composed in the sacrificial schools of the Vedas, was meant to close an epoch of war between the different races inhabiting India, between Devas and Asuras, among the Aryans themselves, between Brahmins and Kshatriyas, between the Kshatriyas themselves, and even among the different Brahmin priests and their followers. It was only natural that an effort should have been made towards lessening the tension existing between different classes of Aryans living in India, and the outcome of this was the Bharata Samhita. In it, moral duties and spiritual happiness received

the mechanical repetition of
the main line on which the
the non-violence led to great spiritual
between brothers and cousins
and hunting, caused dispa-
and even destruction. The sacrifices
in quills and was
one of the Naga sacrifice
admirably, resulting in the
of the Naga, should be
there should be no room for
the exposition of the
the

[illegible]

Differentiation of function among the various classes of men had preceded so far during the period of the sacrifices in India, that the King, as a Brahmin, was concerned with the task of saying the prayers, not only for himself, but for all classes of men who might engage them to expiate their sin and secure prosperity for them by the performance of sacrifice. The sacrifices which the King held were performed, no doubt, to expiate the sin of the King. This was a minor reason for undertaking the expensive sacrifice, like *Atamedha*, etc. The primary object lay in the desire on the part of the Brahmin Rishis to extend cultural fraternity among King- and Rishis who were invited to be present. With the sanction of the illustrious Kings and Rishis present at these sacrifices, the duties enjoined in the Vedas were expounded for inducing the general public to follow them.

They were meant to further the cultural development of all the communities living in Aryavarta on Vedic lines, and to bring into its fold all classes of men; and it was for this that some of the days of the

sacrifice were set apart for the participation of the non-Aryan communities, to whom Vedic instruction was then imparted by the Vedic Rishis. It should be borne in mind that according to the evidence recorded in early literature, the non-Aryans, such as those who lived by hunting and fishing etc., were not despised, but were sought to be uplifted and civilised by the Brahmins and the sacrifices subserved from this point of view a very important purpose. It is also on record in the Mahabharata that the Nishadas, Shabaras, Kiratas and Fishermen were auxiliaries of the Brahmins, who with their help upheld their own cause against hostile kings, such as Vena and Visvamitra.

One of the earliest sacrifices that is mentioned in the Mahabharata was a human sacrifice, performed by King Somaka, who sacrificed his one son Jantu for getting one hundred and one sons as a boon from the gods at the instance of his chief priest. Animals were frequently sacrificed, and this must have raised a revulsion of feeling among many of the Rishis. The priest who had advised King Somaka to perform the child sacrifice was made to pay a penalty for this by being condemned to live in hell. With the awakening of more human feelings, sacrifices were not, however, altogether abolished, but the cruel practices connected with them were considerably minimised, and they were made to serve a higher purpose, namely, the cultural one, of which so much has been written already as to require no further amplification. It was then that an elaborate programme was introduced and all the communities living in the land were addressed on separate days as to what they should or should not do, by means of songs chanted by the Vinaganigas at the order of the Adhvaryu, and through legends.

If we take the history of the performance of sacrifices in historical sequence, according to the version of the Mahabharata and the Purana, it was Manu Vivasvata who first celebrated Yajnas and those who were illustrious among his descendants followed his example. On the first day of the sacrifice, songs (called Gathas) giving accounts of their glorious deeds were sung.

On the second day the story of Yama Vivasvata, who offered King Muchukunda the sovereignty of this world, was told. The story contains the moral that power should be won by one's own exertions and not received as a gift. The lesson of this story was intended for the kings who were present at the sacrifice.

It was in this way and on this line that the original Mahabharata was developed. This is sufficiently indicated in the various legends bearing on sacrifice which are to be found in the Mahabharata. In fact, the Mahabharata begins with the sacrifice performed by King Basuhoma,

the distinguished follower of Indra who was eventually converted into a worshipper of Narayana. It was there that a dispute arose among the priests and the Devas over the question of the expediency of animal or corn sacrifices, and King Basuhoma was cursed by the Rishis for having taken the side of the Devas and decided wrongfully in favour of animal sacrifice. He was freed from the curse when he became a worshipper of Narayana. Some begin the Mahabharata with Manu Vivāsvata and some with Basuhoma or Uparichara.

In the Asvamedha sacrifice the horse, which was then considered to be the most valuable possession, was killed in order to propitiate the gods and obtain from them boons in compensation for the loss which the kings had undergone in this manner. The story of King Somaka (Mbh Bana Parva, Chapter 127) is an illustration of the extent of the grip which this view had on men, and this probably explains the origin of the human sacrifice that prevailed among the Indians at a later period of their history. When the cow came to be regarded as a valuable possession it was sacrificed at the Gomedhah-Yajna with a view to secure the multiplication of wealth and the fulfilment of wishes on the part of the performer. The Rig Veda contains a mystic interpretation of the horse sacrifice in the following lines:

“May not thy breath of life oppress thee when thou goest to the gods, may not the axe injure thy bodies, may not a hasty, unskilled carver, blundering in his work, cleave thy limbs wrongly. Forsooth, thou diest not here, nor dost thou suffer any injury, no, thou goest to the gods along fair, easy paths, the two harits (Indra's) and the dappled deer (the Maruts) will be thy comrades.”

It would be erroneous to hold the view that sacrifice was performed in order to release the soul of the animal from its earthly frame. The sacrifice was due to the then superstition of the people that gods are propitiated not by prayers alone but by the sacrifice of a thing which is very dear to man, and it is well worth remembering that ethical conceptions of philanthropy have their origin in the superstitious propitiatory rites of our ancestors. The Mahabharata gives us numerous instances of kings going to heaven as a reward for their performance of sacrifices in this world. Therefore the view entertained by Oldfield Howey in his book “The Horse in Magic and Myth,” that “the Asvamedha is altogether travestied in the writings of a much later date known as Purans,” cannot be subscribed to. According to him “a mortal rajah performs the sacrifice that he may dethrone the God Indra”—a conception of a much later time. But the Puranas, which give the genealogies of kings who are mentioned even in the Vedas, would not err in assigning the real reasons for which they performed the horse sacrifice, that it was for a definite reward.

The Vedic Mantras, which were uttered at the sacrifices are characteristic of the humanism and spirituality of the Aryan Sages, but they do not negative the assumption that behind the performance of the sacrifice lay a more sordid motive on the part of those who celebrated it at such a cost.

The great cultural value of the performance of Aswamedha and Rājā-Sūya sacrifices by the king has already been adverted to in the foregoing pages, but in view of the opinion of Mr. Howey in his book it is necessary to go into greater detail with regard to the inner significance of the Yajnas performed by the Ancient Indians, and to clear up the position about their real implications and the connections which existed between the horse and the other great sacrifices performed by the Aryan kings in collaboration with illustrious Rishis, and the origin of Bharata Samhita which developed into the Mahabharata, the great Epic of the Hindus.

The horse sacrifice is one of the earliest Vedic institutions and was common to many of the ancient peoples of the world. In the Brahmanic narration of the early history of India, the kings who celebrated the horse sacrifice at the instance of the Brahmins, are given greater prominence in the enumeration than those who did not. One can concede the point that there is and will be considerable difficulty, even insuperable, in distinguishing the truly historical from the purely legendary in these lists. The kings who performed the horse sacrifice and attained renown according to the Mahabharata may be reckoned from Yama Vivasvata. Among the morbid rulers who are mentioned in this connection were Harimedhata, Ranti Deva, Gaya Raja, Sasabindhva, Sagora Nimi, Vaisravata, Nriga Ajamudha, Rama, Khatvanga Dilip, Navagha, Nahusa, Yayati, Mandhata, Kuru, Sambarana, Ailies, Harsyasva, Sambarta, Rajarshi, Astika, the king Maruttva, Sivi, Basumanah, Bhisma, etc.

Mr. M. Oldfield Howey, in his interesting book, "The Horse in Magic and Myth" has proved the antiquity and the almost universality among the Eastern nations of representing the ruler of the day as "being drawn in his chariot by celestial horses on his diurnal journey across the skies. Hence horses figure largely in Solar rites, and used to be led in procession before the Sun God's shrine and in many countries were annually sacrificed to Him." This was the custom among the Israelites, Xenophon testifies that horse sacrifices were performed by the Persians and the Armenians. The Ancient Greeks shared these customs. The Rhodians worshipped the Sun, their chief deity, every year by dedicating to him a chariot and four horses, which were cast into the sea for his use.

This is what he says about the horse sacrifice of the Aryans in A yavarta. The distinctively royal sacrifice of India is the Aswamedha or horse sacrifice. The popularity of the Raja-Suya sacrifice was on the wane and had commenced to be discredited in the Epic Age. It was not therefore well spoken of or supported in the Indian Epics. The Ramayana (Book VII) describes that when Rama Chandra wanted to perform it for the reason that its performance had raised Mitra Suhata to the status of the God Baruna and Soma (Moon) to godhead and to universal fame, Bharata dissuaded him therefrom. Rama had sought the counsel of his brothers Bharata and Lakshman, who had all been sent for the purpose. Bharata did not approve of Raja-Suya sacrifice. He said that the chivalry of the kings would raise false hopes in their minds, make them try their luck and cause destruction. They were all living peacefully under his yoke and it would not be expedient to disturb it. Rama approved of it and asked Lakshman to speak out his mind. Lakshman thought it would be well if he performed the Aswamedha sacrifice by which Indra had formerly been purged of the sin of murdering a Brahmin Brita, and Lakshmana recited the story of Brita, beginning with the worship of Narayana by the Vedic gods Indra and others. Rama Chandra approved of it and said that there was a king of Balhiks named Kardama whose son Ila was a famous and virtuous king of yore. He was transformed into a woman while out on a hunting expedition to the place where Mahatma was born. He worshipped Siva first and wanted that he be restored to his former manliness, but failed. Then he worshipped Durga of Uma, who granted his prayer with this variation, that he would be male for a month and female for the next by rotation. Then when he was female he fell in love with the son of the Moon (Budha) and gave birth to Pururaba, the progenitor of the great line of kings of India. Harivamsa, the sequel of the Mahabharata (Bhabisiya Parva, Chapter II), ascribes the great carnage and destruction of the Kurukshetra war to the Raja-Suya sacrifice of Yudhishthira.

One cannot overlook, in this connection, one very important fact, that the discourse between the chief combatants on the eve of the great war contained a comparison of the principal actors of the war and their implements, with the various rituals and ceremonies of an Aswamedha sacrifice. As the functions and ceremonies connected with Yajna are completely described in these verses, the comparison is reproduced from the Mahabharata. The speech is put in the mouth of Karna, who thus speaks to Krishna —

“O Krishna in the great impending war sacrifice, you will play the part of the Adhvaryu in which capacity you will supervise the performance of the sacrifice, and Vibhatsu, whose banner displays the figure of a monkey, will assume the role of a Hotri or the Priest who will pour offerings in the flames of the fire of War.”

"The Gandiva bow will be the sacrificial ladle and the might of men will constitute the clarified butter to be poured as libation on the fire. The weapons Vintra, Pashu-pata, Brahma, and Shunakarna, O Madhava, used by Savyasachi (Arjuna) will be the incantations (Mantras) in the sacrifice." "I equal to his father or even superior to him in prowess the son of Subhakra will be the Vedic hymn recited there. The repeater (Udgatri) of these incantations again will be Bhima who will also be the Paristari (the preparer), that foremost of men, that destroyer of the elephants in the army, making loud roars in battle. The virtuous souled king Yudhishthira, engaged in making Yajna and Homas, will perform the office of a Brahmana in the sacrificial rite. The sounds of conch shells, of tabors and drums and the roars of lions will announce the hour of dinner in that sacrifice. Nakula and Sahadeva, the two sons of Madri endowed with fame, these two heroes of great strength will be duly the sacrificers of animals in that sacrifice. Furnished with flagstaffs of various colours, spotless robes of carriage, O Govinda, will be the Yupa (staff for fastening sacrificial animals) in this sacrifice. At the end of the principal ceremony, O Janardana, hornin (arrows with barbs), Malika (a rude sort of musket), Varachra (daggers fastened to sticks) and arrows like the teeth of calves and Tamras will be the spoons and vessels for the soma juice. While bows will be substitutes for Pavitras (Ksha-bhava for sprinkling clarified butter). The swords will be substitutes for the Kapilas and the hords of soldiers killed in the field will be those for Parodashas, the blood of warriors will be the clarified butter. O Krishna, in that sacrificial ceremony. The lances will be the substitutes for Paridhas (vessels for depositing the offerings) and the maces will be those for Saktis (the wood work for protecting the offerings), the part of assisting priests will be performed by the disciples of Drona and Kripa and Saradwata. The arrows, let loose by the wielder of the Gandiva bow and shot also by ear warriors urged by Drona and his son, will act for ladles in their sacrifice. Satvaki will do the duties of the chief assistant to the head priest, the son of Dhritarastra will be the performer and his large army will take the place of his wife. Ghatatkecha, of great strength, will be the slayer of the sacrificial animals at the commencement of this sacrificial rite at an advanced hour of the night, O you of long arms. The Dakshina (usual gifts to the priest) of that sacrifice will be Dhristadyumna of great energy for, O Krishna, he was born out of fire in a sacrifice having for its mouth the rites celebrated with Mantras."

The love story of Aila Pururaba and Urbasi received the distinct name of Aila Gita in the famous book *Srimad Bhagavata* (11th Skanda, Chapter XXVI). The *Mahabharata* made a mess of this story and in one place foisted it upon king Pratipa and in another upon Bhagiratha (Adi Parva, Chapter XCVII, Bana Parva, Chapter CCV, verses 25—28 and Shanti Parva, Chapter XCVII). It was Ganga who passed by the name of Urbasi. This is the all important fact that can be inferred from all these contradictory versions. The river Ganga had three courses which were the works of three kings, viz., Pururaba, Bhagiratha and Pratipa, all celebrated for performing sacrifices and making rich presents to Brahmin sages. Kapila first drew the attention of king Sagara to the fact that public good could be achieved not by the performance of Vedic sacrifices only, but by excavating rivers and canals to provide facilities of transport, trade and agricul-

ture and drinking water for men and cattle. It was this that was meant by the story of his detaining the sacrificial horse of the Asvamedha sacrifice and destroying Sagara's sons by a curse as the water of the sea they had dug in was unfit for drinking. Kapila, the great philosopher and sage of the Vedic age, was the son of Kardama by Debahuti.

It was Indra who had kept the horse of king Sagar at the hermitage of Kapila at the estuary of the Ganges with the sea. It was Ansuman, grandson of Sagar, who rescued the horse after propitiating Kapila, who advised him to bring the Ganges there in order that the sons of Sagara might be absolved from the curse. Kapila's disciples followed him and stood against the Vedic practices, and it was for this reason that the Ganges, the most celebrated of the sacred rivers of India, was mentioned in the Rig Veda but once. This is misunderstood and misconstrued by Western scholars. King Sagara was a very strict ruler and exiled his son Asamanjas for his cruelties to the subjects. Kardama's son was Illa, who was a brother of Ikshaku. There seems to be a connection between Kapila and Sagar. It was Bhagiratha who succeeded in bringing the good drinking water of the Ganges to his hermitage and was blessed. The royal sage Jahnu obstructed it and was won over to let it pass, for which his name became connected with the river (as Jahnavi).

In those days the great benefactors' memories were kept alive in the names of the rivers they excavated. The excavation of a river was often connected with a sacrifice. The sages who congregated at the sacrifices wanted rivers near their abodes and rivers were invoked at the time of worship and became sacred. In every worship the names of the seven rivers only, Ganges, Jumna, Godavari, Saraswati, Narmada, Sindhu, Kaveri are mentioned and not the five rivers of the Punjab. This gives a clue to the important fact as to where the ancient Aryan worship of gods took place in India. The hymn-makers of the Vedas give a clue to the names of the authors and the gods they worshipped. Gotra Pravara gives a clue to the educational institutions and their preceptors.

The story of successes is as instructive as that of failures. There is a marked difference between the records of the Hindus and those of the other nations of the world. Stone inscriptions and writings on papyrus were recorded to commemorate passing events, but such was not the case with the Hindus in the earliest Vedic times. Sincere and natural expressions of the simple thirst for knowledge, comfort and sympathy were recorded in the hymns. They were engrained in the hearts of the people by frequent repetitions as family or Gotra

traditions. The oldest Chinese records and the inscriptions of Assyria and Babylon do not shed so much light as do the Vedic hymns and githas, explained and developed in the Brahminas, Sutras and the Epics of Ancient India, on the early stages of Indo-Aryan civilisation and education. There was no bar to the making of hymns on the divine order of Saints, the kings of the Solar and Lunar dynasties had as much hand in it as the plebeians and the patricians of the day.

The catholicity of the early Hindu religion was reflected in this whole-hearted co-ordination of the whole body of able men of the day to re-suscitate the true spirit of the immaculate Hindu religion, to find out truth and to convert the whole body of men into one united nation of one thought, one social bond and one religion. This must have produced war and strife between the literate and the illiterate, and the victory was not always with the literate. The victorious held the land and the defeated retired, which was responsible for world civilisation perhaps. The literate found no difficulty in regaining their lost ground with renewed energy and united strength. The combatants were described as the Devas and Danavas or demons, who were sons of the same father but of different mothers only, and did not belong to different countries or regions.

The places where the Vedic sages and kings lived and fought are not hard to trace. They have become the Holy Land, and the origin of the name of their country Bharatavarsha is not due to the rule of celebrated kings like Bharata, brother of the hero of the Ramayana, or the son of Sakuntala, the heroine of the famous drama of Kalidasa, but to the son of the Rajarshi Rishaba, founder of the Jain religion in India, whose name was also Bharata. Vivasvata Manu of the two Indian Epics performed the sacrifice of Mitra Varuna, but owing to some mistake in place of a son, a daughter Illa, was born. It is also said that he became a girl by the influence of a place where Kartikeya, son of Siva, was born and was converted into man by the boon of Vishnu, which characterises the fight between the two cults. Illabarta was also another name of India, according to the name of Illa. No woman sat on the throne of Ancient India. Those who lived in the Holy land of Aryavarta were called the Aryans and those who were outside it were known as non-Aryans. There was no mention of Aryans invading non-Aryans from the West, passing through the Punjab, in the early Vedic days, as Western scholars want to make out. Manu defined "Aryabartya" clearly and the races of heroes of the several places as well.

In Indian mythological traditions there is no mention of Aryans coming to India from outside and defeating the aborigines. In the

Asoka 13th Rock Edict there is reference to Antiochus II Theos, King of Syria 261—246 B C (perhaps Yona King Antiyoka), Turamaya (Ptolemaios II of Egypt), Autikma (Antigonous Gonates of Macedonia) Maka (Mugus of Cyrene) and Alika Sudan (Alexander of Epirus) as living. It proves beyond the shadow of a doubt that there is no mention of their having ever ruled in India. It is well-known that Alexander's failure to gain a firm footing in India made him so dispirited that he gave himself up to drinking and sacrificed his life, before returning home. Attempts have been made to fix the date of the great Kurukshetra battle through the help of astronomy, but there is hardly any data to work out the time of the fight between the Devas and Danavas or that of the composition of the Bharata Samhita. The religious and spiritual talisman of a Gotra was a special feature in India. The preceptors of the worshippers were first worshipped and this practice is followed even now.

The five gods Ganesh, Surjye (the Sun), Durga, Siva and Vishnu are still worshipped by the Hindus before the worshipper makes obeisance and offerings to his own special god. There is distinct mention of places celebrated as the distinct headquarters of the different cults. Srabatsa and Srkantha are two of the places mentioned in the Epics. Professor Rapson in his "Ancient India" and the poet Bana in "Harsacharita," have identified them with Allahabad and Delhi, respectively. The division of the kingdom of India amongst the sons of Rama and those of his brothers is mentioned in the Uttarakanda Ramayana (Book VII, Canto 120, etc.) The king of Kekaya Judhajit sent his priest Gargya, a descendant of Angira, with presents to Rama with a request that the kingdom of Gandharvas should be conquered by him. Rama complied with that request and sent Bharata and his two sons, Taksha and Puskala, to conquer the region. They did so and the name of Takshashila (Taxila) owed its origin to that prince Taksha, who reigned there (Ramayana Book VII, Canto 114). This shows the expansion of the Indian kingdom. The eldest son of Illa, Sasabindu, extended his dominion upto Persia, in Balhika country, and founded the kingdom whose capital was at Pratisthan (Book VII, Canto 103), Allahabad. Ayodhya owes its name to king Ayu, father of the famous king Nahusa, who was said to have usurped the throne of Indra. It was the capital of the kings of the Ikshaku dynasty. Here the first institution of education seems to have been established and the name of Ayodha Dhaumya (Dhaumya of Ayodha) has perhaps some reference to it. The name of the preceptor in Pousya Parva, was Dhaumya, and the annotator Nilkantha explained the adjective Ayodha

It is said that the pious king Mahavisa of the Ikshaku race went to Heaven and was found wanting in manners when he cast glances at the body of Ganga, displayed by force of the wind. It may be a question of killing two birds with one stone, but in majestic Epic literature such a thing is rather out of place. He was cursed for this and was re-born, Santanu was Mahavisa in a previous life. His father Pratip and his mother were practising religious austerities for a son and they were blessed with one. It is quite inconceivable how Ganga fell in love with Pratip, but the king told her that she would be his daughter-in-law. The important question of the age of bride and bridegroom arises in this statement, for Santanu was not born then. In the table of contents of the Pouranic Mahabharata there is a mention of Vasistha's curse and Basu was transformed into Bhishma (67 Chapter, Adi Parva). Consequently the fearful son of Santanu belongs to the Epic when it assumed the form of a romance and not history.

The idea of purification is not connected with all the streams of India but with certain ones whose names even now are uttered to sanctify the water used in worship. Such is the homage paid to the sacred rivers of India that Bhishma is said to have been born from Ganga or Ganges, the most sacred of all rivers, whom Siva keeps on the lock of his head and which flows from the snowy ranges of the Himalayas. Durga or Uma and Ganga or Ganges, the two daughters of the king of the Himalayas, were the wives of Siva. The incident of Ganges coming down to earth as the wife of Santanu for a trifling cause, and the birth of Bhishma, are therefore very hard to take as historical facts. Bhishma is the creation of the Epic as Daimon in Grecian Epic. Professor Max Muller speaks of it as one of

'The three important roads leading to the discovery of something Divine in Man. We have thus discovered three roads on which the Greeks were conducted to the discovery of something more than human, something superhuman, something divine or infinite in man. The most important road was that of ancestor worship, beginning with the honours paid to departed parents, grand parents, and great grand-parents, then leading on to the worship of the ancestors of a family, of a clan, of a town, and of a state, and ending in the recognition of a world of spirits, not far removed from the world of the Gods.

"The second road started from a kind of mythological belief in human heroes, as the offspring of Zeus. Afterwards ordinary mortals also were raised to the same level, and thus another approach was made to the discovery of something divine, or, at least, God like in man. The third road started from a belief in divine powers, called Daimones. These spirits were supposed to watch over the destiny of a man, then to become his destiny. A man being possessed by his daimon was at last identified with it, and the divine in man was thus once more recognised as the daimon, of Socrates and other philosophers. Nearness, likeness, and oneness with the Divine are the three goals which the human mind reached in Greece. In each case we see

that a belief in nature gods is pre-supposed—nay that without that belief anthropological religion would be simply impossible.”

In the Mahabharata, Santi Parva, Chapter 284, one finds the origin of Kali from Durga

“Virabhadra said—‘I am neither Rudra nor his consort the goddess Uma. Nor have I come here for partaking of the food. Knowing the fact of Uma’s anger, the powerful Lord who is the soul of all creatures has yielded to anger. I have not come here for seeing the foremost of Brahmanas. I have not come here, impelled by curiosity. Know that I have come here for destroying this sacrifice of yours. I am known by the name of Virabhadra and I have originated from the anger of Rudra. This lady who is called Bhadrakali, has originated from the anger of the goddess. We have both been sent by that god of gods, and we have accordingly come here. O foremost of Brahmanas, seek the protection of that Lord of the gods, the consort of Uma.’ It is better to incur even the anger of that foremost of gods than to obtain boons from any other god. Hearing the words of Virabhadra, Dakṣiṇa, that foremost of all pious men, bowed down unto Maheshwara and sought to please him by uttering the following hymn.”

This is in connection with the predominance of Narayana cult over the Pasupati cult. Its discourse bearing upon the subject is to be found in the subsequent Chapter 350, where *Shiva* is described as *Trayambaka*. Durga is not a pouranic goddess as there are hymns in the Vedas (*Rig Veda*, Max Muller’s translation Vol. vi, p. 83) where she is invoked to overcome obstacles in war as the following quotation shows.

“All who are bewildered in obstacles, in misfortune, in fearful war, in trouble from enemies, in visitations from fire or thieves, in escape from evil stars, in troublesome obstacles, in wars and wildernesses, approach the Giver of security from these, give us security from these. Om, adoration! May Durga, the goddess (Devī), be propitious for our success!†”

The authors of the Epics and their family were connected with *Shiva* and *Durga* worship. Quotations of the Mahabharata will speak for themselves—

“Then the illustrious Valmiki, addressing Yudhishthira, said,—Once upon a time, in course of a disputation, certain ascetics who possessed the Rama fire condemned me as one guilty of Brahmanicide. As soon as they had condemned me as such, the sin of Brahmanicide, O Bharata, possessed me. I then, for purifying myself, sought the protection of the sinless Ishana, who is irresistible in energy. I became purged of all my sins. That remover of all sorrows viz., the destroyer of the triple city of the Asuras, said to me,—You will acquire great fame in the world.

Parashara said,—Formerly I pleased Sarva, O king. I then cherished the desire of getting a son who would be endued with great ascetic merit, and superior energy, and addressed to high Yoga, that would acquire world-wide fame, arrange the Vedas and become the home of prosperity, that would be devoted to the Vedas and the Brahmanas, and be famous for mercy. Such a son was desired by me from Maheshwara. Knowing that this was the wish of my heart,

* Professor M. N. Dutta’s English Translation of the Mbh. Santi Parva, Chapter CCLXXXIV, pp. 433, Slokas 49–53.

† Professor Max Muller’s “Collected Works” pp. 411–412.

that foremost of gods said to me,—Through the fruition of that object of yours which you wish to get from me, you will have a son named Krishna. In that creation which shall be known after the name of Savarni-Manu, that son of yours shall be reckoned among the seven Rishis. He shall arrange the Vedas, and be the propagator of Kuru's race. He shall, besides be the author of the ancient histories and do behoof to the world. Gifted with severe penances he shall, again, be the dear friend of Shakra. Freed from all sorts of diseases, that son of yours, O Parashara, shall, besides be immortal.*

"The great ascetic Ushanas, crowned with Yoga success, entered the person of Kubera, and depriving the lord of wealth of his liberty by means of Yoga, robbed him of all his riches. Seeing his riches taken away from him, the lord of wealth became highly displeased. Filled with anxiety, and his anger also being worked up, he went to that foremost of gods, viz., Mahadeva. Kubera reported the matter to Shiva of great energy that first of gods, fierce and amiable, and endued with various forms. Shiva said.—Ushanas, having spiritualised himself by Yoga, entered my body and depriving myself of liberty, has taken away all my riches. Having by Yoga entered my body he has again left it. Hearing these words, Maheshwara of Supreme Yoga-powers became filled with ire. His eyes, O king, became blood red, and taking up his lance he waited. When the fierce armed and powerful Mahadeva of great energy had thus bent his lance that weapon came to be called from that time by the name of Pinaka. The lord of Uma, seeing Bhargava thus brought upon the palm of his hand, opened his mouth. The chief of the gods then threw Bhargava into his mouth and swallowed him up. The powerful and great Ushanas of Bhṛigu's race, entering the stomach of Maheshwara, began to wander there. At last he found the outlet and came out through it. On account of this incident he passed by the name of Shukra, and it is for this he also became unable to attain the central point of the sky. Seeing him come out of his stomach and shining brightly with energy, Bhava, filled with anger, stood with lance uplifted in his hand. The goddess Uma then interposed and forbade the angry lord of all creatures, viz., her consort, to kill the Brahmana. And on account of Uma's having thus prevented her lord from fulfilling his purpose, the ascetic Ushanas became the son of the goddess. The goddess said—This Brahmana no longer deserves to be killed by you. He has become my son. O god, one who comes out of your stomach does not deserve to be killed by you. Bhūma said—Pacified by these words of his wife, Bhava smiled and said repeated'y these words, O king, viz.,—Let this one go wherever he likes. Bowing to the boon-giving Mahadeva and also to his wife the goddess Uma, the great ascetic Ushanas, gifted with superior intelligence, proceeded to the place he chose†."

The Uttarakanda Ramayana speaks of the fight between the brothers Kubera and Ravana and the defeat of Kubera, which is implied in the foregoing quotation of the Mahabharata Bhargava affair. There is very clear mention of the sages' spiritual success through their hymns on Vishnu in the Rig Veda, and the Mahabharata was made out of the same Veda.

"Ushanas became Shukra by having pleased the god of gods. Indeed, by singing the praises of the goddess (Uma) he sports in the sky, in great effulgence. Then, again, Asita and Devala, and Narada and Parvata and Kakshivat, and Jama-dagni's son Rama, and Tandiya possessed of purified soul, and Vashistha, and

* Mbh. Anushasana Parva, Chapter XVIII, pp. 60-61, Slokas 8-10 and 41-45.

† Mbh. Shanti Parva, Chapter CCXC, pp. 448-449, slokas 9-13, 18-20 and 32-37.

Jamadagni, and Vishwamitra and Atri, and Bharadwaja and Harishmashru and Kundadhara, and Shrutashraya—these great sages, by worshipping Vishnu with concentrated minds with the help of Rishis and by penances, acquired success through the grace of that great god gifted with intelligence.”*

The aim and object of the Durga Hymn in the Rig Veda and the Mahabharata seem to be almost identical. What is more, the autumn worship of Durga, it is said, was undertaken by Rama to kill Ravana. It is recited in the avowal of the purpose of the autumn worship, called Saradiya Puja, even now by every performer in the Sankalpa or the preliminary object of worship, which bears out the strong tradition so very current and believed to be true by the general Hindu public. The worship of Durga begins at night and the immersion ceremony—the last rite—takes place at night, and it was for this reason the Durga hymn is called night hymn. Taittiriya Aranyaka of Vyasa and Mahanirayan Upanishad contain many invocations and verses on Durga. The word Trayambaka is derived from Stri (wife) Ambika (Satapatha Brahmana II, 6, 2, 9). In Taittiriya Brahmana Ambika is called Sarada and from the name Saradiya Puja (worship) came into vogue. All these prove the importance of Durga worship and its antiquity. In the Bhishma Parva, Durga is not only the representative of Brahma-Vidya but Mahamaya herself, who discovers the real Brahma behind the veil of Maya or illusion. The famous incantation (Mantra) of Mahamritunjaya begins with the Trayambaka invocation, so much in vogue to overcome death and disease even now all over the Hindu world.

Sri Krishna advised Arjuna to fight Bhishma in one chapter and in the next, at his instance, Arjuna worshipped Durga and received her blessing to win the difficult battle of Kurukshetra.

“The Goddess said—O son of Pandu, you will vanquish your enemy in no time. O invincible one, you have Narayana himself to help you. You are incapable of being defeated by any foe, not even by the wielder of thunderbolt (Indra). Sanjaya said—Ifarav said this, that boon giving goddess disappeared.”

How again he was capable of being attacked with such a weakness as was represented in the Gita immediately after this boon of Durga is quite inconceivable. Western scholars ascribe Pauranic origin to Durga and some scholars like Professors Weber and Moor have tried to show that the Pauranic Durga was nothing but a continuation of Vedic Kali, in which Professor Max Muller thinks there is some truth (“*vide* pp 163 of his book “Collected Works”) and he in his appendix to this book has given the hymn on Durga from one of the Khilas of the

* Mbh Shanti Parva, Chapter CCXCIII, pp 452, Slokas 14-15

† The Mahabharata (M N Dutta) Bhishma Parva, Chapter XXIII, p 30, Verses 18-19.

Rig Veda Besides, he mentioned "Several of the names given to Rudra in the Taittiriya Aranyaka, points to him as the husband of Durga" It has been shown that Vyasa is the author of Taittiriya Aranyaka and the Mahabharata, consequently the mention of the goddess Durga cannot belong to a later age; but this much is certain that the worship of Krishna and the Gita literature belong to a later age and Vyasa, the author of Brahma Sutra or of Yajurveda cannot be the author of the Gita, for obvious reasons of extolling Samkhya Philosophy and Sama Veda The names of the wives of Bichittra-birya are Ambika and Ambalika, the daughters of the king of Benares, the centre of Sakti worship, and these are the names of Durga The prayer to Durga by Arjuna before the battle and by Yudhishthira before entering the kingdom Virata are significant facts in the history of religion.

In Vedic India fathers became companions of the Devas and laid the foundation of ancestor worship The idea of one soul and his kinship to the Creator are the roots of ancestor worship Herbert Spencer's definition of ancestor worship, as explained by Professor Max Muller, is of very great interest to the Epic theory of the growth of religion and narration.

"The remarkable man may be the founder of the tribe, he may be a chief famed for strength and bravery, he may be a medicine-man of great repute, he may be an inventor of something new, and then, instead of being a member of the tribe, he may be a superior stranger bringing arts and knowledge or he may be one of a superior race gaining pre-dominance by conquest Being at first one or other of those, regarded with awe during his life, he is regarded with increased awe after his death, and the propitiation of ghosts which are less feared, develops into an established worship There is no exception then Using the phrase ancestor worship in its broadest sense as comprehending all worship of the dead, be they of the same blood or not, we conclude that ancestor worship is the root of every religion

Ancestor-worship pre supposes a belief in Gods

"That ancestor worship is more fertile in religious thought than fetishism or totemism, will be denied by no one who is acquainted with any of the ancient religions of the world, with those of Rome and Greece, and, more especially, of India But any scholar acquainted with the literature of these countries, knows at the same time how in every one of these religions ancestor-worship pre supposes nature worship, or, more correctly, a worship of the gods of nature

"We constantly hear that the Departed, the Fathers, the Ancestors, the Heroes are admitted to the society of the gods, they are often called half gods, they may at times claim even a certain equality with the gods But the gods are always there before them, and even when their individual names are forgotten, there is the general concept of deity to which the ancestral spirits aspire

"Thus we read in the golden words ascribed to Pythagoras: 'whoever their author may have been

'First to the immortal gods pay reverent due,
Honour thy oath, and give the Heroes praise
And those beneath the earth by actions just
Reverence thy parents and thy nearest kin
And count him friend whose virtue brightest shines
To gentle words incline and useful deeds

"Again, when Plato speaks of the divine powers that ought to be revered by obeying their laws and wishes, he says (*Laws*, xi. 927)

"But if these things are really so, in the first place men should have a fear of the gods above, who regard the loneliness of orphans; and in the second place of the souls of the departed who by nature incline to take an especial care of their own children and they are friendly to those who honour them, and unfriendly to those who do not."

Professor Max Muller says—"In the same manner then in which, out of the bright powers of nature the Devas or Gods had arisen, there arose out of predicates shared in common by the departed such as Pitris, fathers, preta, gone away, another general concept what we should call Manes, the kind ones, Ancestors, Shades, Spirits or Ghosts whose worship was nowhere more fully developed than in India. That common name Pitris or Fathers, gradually attracted towards itself all that the fathers shared in common. It came to mean not only fathers, but invisible, kind, powerful, immortal heavenly beings and we can watch in the Veda, better perhaps than anywhere else the inevitable, yet most touching metamorphosis of ancient thought—the love of the child for father and mother becoming transfigured into an instinctive belief in the immortality of the soul. It is strange, and really more than strange, that not only should this important and prominent side of the ancient religion of the Hindus have been ignored, but that of late its very existence should have been doubted†

Plato on Gods, Daemones, Heroes, and Ancestral Spirits

"We cannot find a better summing up of the last results of Greek religion than what is given us by Plato. 'First, he says (*Laws* 716 seq.), 'comes a belief in God, in that God who as the old tradition declares, holds in His hand the beginning middle, and end of all that is and moves according to His nature in a straight line (rite) towards the accomplishment of His end. Justice always follows Him, and is the punisher of those who fall short of the divine law. Every man therefore ought to make up his mind that he will be one of the followers of God—and he who would be dear to God must, as far as possible, be like Him and such as He is.'"

"Now this may seem a very philosophical religion, but this belief in God, quite apart from a belief in the many Olympian gods, can be discovered in Homer quite as much as in Plato. In the *Iliad*, ix, 49, Diomedes says, (*Lectures on the Science of Language*, ii, 463) 'Let all flee home, but we two I and Sthenelos, will fight till we see the end of Troy for we come with God.'"

"In the *Odyssey* (xiv 441, x.306), the swineherd says to Ulysses 'Eat and enjoy what is here, for God will grant one thing but another He will refuse, whatever He will in His mind, for He can do all things.'"

* Professor Max Muller's "Collected Works" pp 127-129

† Professor Max Muller's "India, What Can it Teach Us" Lecture VII, p 220.

"And Plato himself, after he has thus spoken of God, continues 'This is the conclusion, which is also the noblest and truest of all sayings, that for the good man to offer sacrifices to the Gods, and hold converse with them by means of prayers and offerings and every kind of service, is the noblest and best of all things, and also the most conducive to a happy life, and very fit and meet'

"He then continues 'Next after the Olympian gods, and the gods of the State, honour should be given to the gods below. Next to these gods a wise man will do service to the daimones or spirits, and then to the heroes, and after them will follow the sacred places of private and ancestral gods having their ritual according to Law. Next comes the honour of living parents, to whom, as is meet, we have to pay the first and greatest and oldest of all debts. And all his life long a man ought never to utter an unbecoming word to them, for of all light and winged words he will have to give an account, Nemesis, the messenger of Justice, is appointed to watch over them. When they are angry and want to satisfy their feelings in word or deed, he should not resist them, for a father who thinks that he has been wronged by his son may be reasonably expected to be very angry. At their death, the most moderate funeral is best. And let a man not forget to pay the yearly tribute of respect to the dead, honouring them chiefly by omitting nothing that conduces to a perpetual remembrance of them, and giving a reasonable portion of his fortune to the dead.'

"Whatever in this account of Greek religion in its widest sense may be ascribed to Plato personally, one thing seems very clear, that at his time a belief in the Olympian gods, and a belief in the spirits of the departed, existed peaceably side by side, and that funeral ceremonies, and a continued commemoration of the dead were considered essential elements of a truly religious life, quite as much as the sacrifices and praises of the great gods of nature."

The Aryan mind was not only occupied with the problems of the present world, but with a rare devotion turned to the solution of those of the past and their original cause, and the problem of future existence. It is true that the compendious literature of the Aryan is not free from indications of the primitive mind struggling for enlightenment in an atmosphere of coarse superstition, as we find in the Atharva Veda, but the speculative mind of the Aryans soon leaves far behind the simple mentality of an early age and plunges into the unfathomable mysteries of this world and beyond and discovers truths which enable men to walk in the path of righteousness in this world with a sure grasp of its realities. In India only, people learnt by centuries of meditation, sacrifices, and from the teachings of a galaxy of sacred seers and hoary-headed patriarchs. If a proper valuation of the Aryan culture of India is made, one has no doubt that it will be considered unique. In India, religion was not of a very simple kind, and in its final analysis is found to be the milk of nature developed into the bread problem of life only. Nowhere in the world did

religion and metaphysical ideas strike such deep root as in Ancient India, where even women like Sulava, Maitreye and Sandili, not only preached sublime doctrines but learned to be indifferent to pleasure and pain and made no difference between life and death, while some chose death with a view to release them from the bond which prevented them from merging their own Self (Atman) in the eternal Self (Paramatman)

It is not the idol the symbol of life in the dead statue of a great god or divine saint, which a nation worships. It is not a question of speaking to them through the power of the will and faith of the priest or follower, like the Oracle of Delphi. The propounders or followers of every religion cry that the voice of God or His Prophet calls everyman to follow His religion, so that one may be delivered of his sins and relieved of his sighs and sorrows. It is nothing but absolute knowledge to overcome sorrow and pain and to crown success in the world below, and above in the after life, that the Indian Epics are designated as religious books of real history of the success of an Ancient Hindu nation, distinguished with the name Aryan or Arya. They saw the presence of the Creator in the skill of Nature, in day and night, in the Sun and in the Moon and in the Stars appearing in bright effulgence and disappearing in the process of time, or with the freaks of Nature—cloud, lightning, thunder and storm—in the vast limitless ocean bellowing forth in contrast with the quiet sparkling pool with fragrant lilies full of humming bees, in the trembling evergreen blades of grass, at the feet of the glow-worm or butterfly, in trees bending with fruits and flowers, sometimes very beautiful, sometimes barren—harmony with the laws of Nature and Season. The play of heart and the work of brain, how they are co-related with the so-called dead Nature around, in the sphere of knowledge and observance, are all manifest in the Creation, to give strength and courage to do one's duty here below.

The ordinary events and appearances of Nature cannot arouse or gratify curiosity or admiration. Therefore that powerful propensity of human nature towards the new and surprising, animated by its delight, was eagerly laid hold of by the legislators, poets, philosophers, priests and kings. The personification of virtue, vice, religion and moral affection soon became the order of the day. The theory of the divine nature, diffused through the human soul and comprehended in it, the principles and elements of all truth, human and divine, were established. They proceed to show by examples that celestial flame could not be generated by the flames of sacrifices or study but by such acts as might

tend to exhaust and attenuate the body in silence and solitude by the practice of certain discovered hidden words to produce its latent virtue, to instruct man in the knowledge of divine things

Vyasa and Valmiki, it must be understood, wrote the Epics under such conditions and not under the school of present-day Western thought, which guides Western scholars to criticise the books of the Hindus and earn fame and lucrative berths in the universities. If any such chief was done it was by the later editors, who revised or reconstructed the Epics. As regards the worship of gods according to the Epic, there is a pure and very strict moral and spiritual life which was pleasing to them and gained their favour. It was not a question of any cult or dogma. Religious toleration is as necessary for the unity and growth of any nation as spiritual, moral or bodily exercise. The rules of private life at different stages were made, and lessons on them formed the essential parts of the Epic. The forms of outward worship were not then so very necessary as the growth of the belief in the gods in the mass was found imperative. Religious feelings could not be re-kindled by forms which could not be understood.

The days of myths and mythism were gone. The gods were divided into the divinities of Heaven, Earth, Sea and Patala in order of precedence. Pious, moral, dutiful men go to Heaven, the wise men rule the Earth, adventurous resourceful men rule the Ocean, and the vain and pre-umptuous go down to Patala, i.e., different from earth. Eventually everything with the mass became more a matter of state, religion and custom than anything else. Many old cults and customs were changed by conquest. Shrines and illustrious men became the centre of mob attraction. It was thus that the gods and their great prophets, as their incarnations, were worshipped. The manifold protecting gods for different events of life in times of trouble were invoked. Indian religion thus became an affair of the state, when responsible men were employed by the king himself to write the book of religion and, when it was approved of by the public assembly at the Royal sacrifice, the author was rewarded. It was for this reason that the name of the book was connected with the name of the king and not the family of kings, as the Bharata Samhita with the king Bharata, the Ramayana with Rama.

But the name Mahabharata is given to the enlarged Epic of the greater and growing Bharata people, with the ideals of a national Epic of very great importance which contains all that is worth knowing of India as a whole continent at different stages and not of any province or kingdom at all or of one time. The question of the historical process of chronology was never thought of as being possible or necessary in a work

of this sort. To assuage the sorrow of the afflicted heart and realise the essence of religion and duty in the sphere of human work in the earth below were the aims of the Epic. Virtue will have its reward, though vice may rise for a time to be uprooted fully with growth so that it may not grow again. The demons belong to a later age than gods and men, and the introduction of foreign deities is mentioned in Greece*.

In Epic literature hero-worship is prominent. There is an unique advantage in being a ruler, one can do more good than an ordinary man. The desire for reputation owes its birth to a virtuous instinct. A good reputation is a kind of second inheritance. Courage and knowledge go together in the making of greatness. Mere knowledge without courage and ability is a barren possession. It is a great and noble task for a king to rule justly, for men are not the masters of their impulses,—materialists think with their eyes and idealists see with their heads and mind. The neglected education of its youth is the ruin of a nation. The fruits of honest labour are honour, profit and enjoyment. Liberty consists of doing what is right and lawful and not what one likes. It is for this that good kings were worshipped and praised, being regarded as the divine dispensers of good, and tyrants were killed by heroes who were loved and honoured by suffering humanity. Filial and fraternal love and piety as well as chastity and constancy were loved and worshipped and rewarded by kings. Scholarship and skill made men famous. A stout heart overcomes bad fortune and the heart of the soul is trust in God. Love and faith are seen in deeds. Repaying injury with kindness is the way that prudent men act. Love makes all positions equal. The heart is the root of faith and love. Goodness never dies. Desire makes beautiful what is actually ugly and detestable. Passion loves the body but true love exalts the soul. A wise man does not fight against fate. Courtesy is the subtle fascination that a great man employs. When all these good qualities and greatness were found in a man he was worshipped as a God alone. This was the epoch-

* 'From the earliest times we find deities worshipped in one place, who were not known in another. But some of these, as Dionysus and Pan became common property in course of time, and, the more lasting and more extensive the intercourse became with other peoples more especially in the colonies, the introduction of foreign deities became greater. Some of these were identified with the gods already worshipped, while others preserved their original attributes subject, of course, to modifications to suit the spirit of the Greeks. This aptitude for naturalising foreign religions declined more and more as Greece ceased to flourish. On the other hand some original deities lost their independence and were merged into others, such as Helios and Apollo, Selene and Artemis. In the popular belief of the post Homeric time another numerous class of superhuman beings sprang up, which were regarded as being between gods and men, the demons (Gr. Daimones) and Heroes (q v)'—Professor Seyffert's 'Dictionary of Classical Antiquities' p 537

making age when the famous Nara Narayana worship flourished in India. It was introduced in the tenth Mandala, 90th Sukta, 4th Astaka, 4th Chapter of the Rig Veda reputed to be Purusha Sukta made by the sage Narayana. In it Birata, body of Purusha, God with three feet, was described laying the foundation of the organic caste system of India out of a sacrifice performed with the separate incantations of Rik, Sama and Yaju. It is remarked in Muir's Sanskrit text as follows —

"It was evidently produced at a period when the ceremonial of sacrifice was largely developed" "Penetrated with a sense of the sanctity and efficacy of the rite, and familiar with all its details the priestly poet to whom we owe this hymn has thought it no profanity to represent the supreme Purusha himself as forming the victim (Vol V, p 373)"

The Uttarakanda Ramayana says that Nara Narayana worship would flourish at the beginning of Kali Yuga or Dark Age (Book VII, Canto 63, 22 verse). It is evident from the hymns of the Rig Veda that they at first stood for the representation of natural phenomena and later on the forces controlling them. It contains prayers for 33 deities and is thus a manual of divinity worshippers, as well as that of ancestor worshippers. Eventually, in the process of time, it struck the divine sages that they were nothing but the manifestation of one supreme being, the creator of the Universe. This is the outcome of the intensive minds of the Indo Aryans, who could not accept diversity as the settled order of things but saw through the multiplicity of forms, one fundamental unity which lay at their root. They awoke to the consciousness of this unity while invoking the Vedic gods at the sacrifices. Agni was invoked as the great God, as the Mitra, Baruna and even Indra*.

The evidence of the Brihadaranyaka Upanishada with regard to the process of simplification that was going on in the mind of the more cultured people is very important. It is the ruling of Yajnavalkya, who cited Vaisya-deva Sastra in answer to a question put to him by Vidagdha Sakalya—a Sakalya Brahman—that all gods might be reduced to two and eventually to one, Mahapurusha, who was in later times designated as Narayana. The thirty-three Vedic gods comprise the following —

The Eight Basus — Aditya (the Sun), Chandramah (the Moon), the Nakshatras (the Stars), Agni (Fire), Vayu (Air), Devyaloka (Heaven), Antariksha (Sky), and Prithivi (Earth)

The Eleven Rudras — The five senses and five sources of knowledge पञ्चज्ञानेन्द्रिय and mind.

The Twelve Adityas were the twelve months which come and go in rotation after exacting their dues, growing and preserving, throwing out the old for giving birth to the new

* Rigveda महत् देवानामात्मसूतवेदेक, "त्वमास वरुणो जायते यश् मित्रो भवसि यत् समिद्धं ।

Indra was represented as the source of lightning and giver of rains with thunder.

Prajapati is represented as Yajna (sacrifice) and Indra became subsequently a personification of the attributes of rulership of Heaven, which was transmitted to earthly rulership. Prajapati is Yajna, a source of acquiring strength through the religious rites of the Brahmans, who were the intelligentsia of the Indo-Aryan body, and the kings, who as patrons of Brahmans were considered to be the observed of all observers and received the title of (*Niroottama*) the superman among mortals. The monarchical idea was further advanced on Vedic lines in the *Bharata Samhita*. The king was said to cloak the evils of his authority by charity and performance of religious rites in the same way as a female hides her body by means of clothes.

The eleven Rudras are not characteristic features of a very primitive period of civilisation, as is sometimes sought to be made out by many learned scholars. The personification of the five senses of mind and the five sources of knowledge as gods show an advanced state of mind bent upon philosophical enquiry.

The origin of religion and idea of God is the most interesting subject. It can be traced from the method of rationalism or analysing mythology into human kings, heroes and adventurers, now expressed and called Euthemerism after its founder Euthermus, a Greek writer who visited India. He wrote a work purporting to explain world mythology. He based his book, it was said, on an inscription on a golden pillar in the temple of Zeus on the Island of Panchaea in the neighbourhood of India.*

Plato said — 'Whoever goes uninitiated to Hades will lie in mud, but he who has been purified and is fully initiate, when he comes thither will dwell with the gods.'

Pindar says — "One is the race of men with the race of Gods, for one is the mother that gave to both one breath of life, yet sundered are they by powers wholly diverse in that mankind is as naught, but Heaven is builded of brass that abideth ever unshaken."

Ancient and modern evidence tend to emphasize the belief in the female origin and control of life. Among the goddesses, one who gave birth to the chief deities, male and female, was the great mother Adya Sakti. The mystic conception of the great mother was bisexual. The Babylonian Nannar (sin), the Moon God, was father and mother of gods and men, likewise the Syrian Baal, the Persian Mithra. Mitra Varuni's offspring are said to have been the great Vasistha and Agastya. The two great dynasties of kings of Ancient India descended from Ila, the son and afterwards daughter of Manu.

* Dr Oskar Seyffert's "Dictionary of Classical Antiquities" p 227

It is in one of the myths built the world 'as an architect builds a house' (Astrow's *Religious Belief in Babylonia and Assyria* p. 53). According to the Rigveda the Aryan Indian god Indra similarly constructed the house of the universe which appears to have been supported by the 'world tree' (Indian Myth and Legend, p. 10). The world supporting tree, Yggdrasil, figures in Teutonic Mythology. Mount Meru, the Indian Olympus, which supports the Paradise of Indra is 'the world spine'. In Egypt the dead (dad, or t) amulet is the spine of Osiris in his character as the world god (p. 77). All the ancient deities reflected the habits of life of their worshippers, and retained traces of savage conceptions after they assumed benevolent attributes among cultured people. The Hellenic Rhea although called the 'Mother of the Gods' was not a self-created being but the daughter of Gaia the earth mother and Uranus the sky father who equates with the Aryan Indian Dyaus and Prithivi the sky father and earth mother of Indra (173). Gaia thus has a similar fate to Itana, of Babylonian fame. Nimrod in the Koran legend and the son of the eagle giant Garuda, in the Indian Epic Mahabharata. Itana and Nimrod ascended on the backs of eagles whose pinions were burnt by the sun. The Indian eagle was similarly punished for its presumption (Babylonian Myth and Legend, pp. 160 et seq.).

It is indeed interesting to find that the eagle is a standard of a Roman legend. Indian elephants were first used in European warfare by the successors of Alexander for the purpose of breaking-through the enemy's ranks.

"The personification of the world ruling deity was first worshipped as a goddess Roma (Dea Roma) by some cities of Asia Minor in the 2nd Century B.C. She was represented under the image of a Tyche (p. 7), with the mural crown on her head and with all the attributes of prosperity and power. Under Augustus her cult in the Hellenic cities was united partly with that of Augustus partly with that of the deified Caesar, Divus Iulius."

The Roma and Rama of the Ramayana can easily be identified, for Professor Max Muller says

'The siege of Troy is a repetition of the daily siege of the east by the solar powers that are robbed of their brightest treasures in the West.'

Mr Cox, one of his critics, added a new hypothesis when he said

'Few will venture to deny that the stealing of the bright clouds of sunset by the dark powers of night the weary search for them through the long night the battle with the robbers, as the darkness is driven away by the advancing chariot of the lord of light are favourite subjects with the Vedic poets. If such a war took place it must be carried back to a time preceding the dispersion of the Aryan tribes from their original home. The peasants of Greece at the present day remember Lamia, the 'Queen of Libya', who was loved by Zeus.'

'The worship of Zeus, the father god, had a political significance. He was imposed as the chief deity on various Pantheons by the Hellenic conquerors of prehistoric Greece, but local deities suffered little or no change except in name. Dionysus might be called Zeus, but he still continued to be Dionysus, the son of the Great Mother, and did not become Zeus the self-created father god. In India there is a ferocious goddess who resembles Anus of Leicester. This is Black Kali. She is usually depicted dancing the 'dance of fertility', like the Aurignacian and Bushman

*Donald A. Mackenzie's "Myths of Crete and Pre-Hellenic Europe," pp. 305, 172, 173 and 112.

† Seyffert's "Dictionary of Classical Antiquities," p. 548.

the Modern artist has given her normal eyes but have retained also the primitive foreboding. She wears a necklace of human or giant heads and from her girdle dangle the heads and skins of victims. It would appear that Kali, whose body was smeared with the sacrificial blood, was a form of the earth goddess, her darker form was *Ugalligurni*, the yellow woman, while as the love and fertility deity she was the beautiful *Lalashmi* or *Sri*, she was *Durga* as the Goddess of war. (In a Myth and Legend pp. xi and 14-150). The identification of the god with an animal suggests a totemism. In one of the early culture stages it was believed that the spirit of the anonymous tribal ancestor existed in a bull, a boar, a pig, or a deer as the case might be. Invariably the animal was an edible one—the source of the food supply, or the guardian of it. Osiris in one part of Egypt was a bull and in another a pig. He apparently also had a boar form. Set went out to hunt a wild boar when he found the body of Osiris and tore it in pieces."

Greek mythology, in which the beliefs of various ethnic elements were fused, and savage traditions were ultimately transformed by historic speculations, survives mainly as the product of a cultured age. But the poets and artists could not divest it wholly of its primitive traits. What Zeus is to the Greeks Jupiter is to the Romans, the essence of all divine power. The very name of Zeus (Sanskrit *Dyaus*), "the bright sky," identifies him as the God of the sky and its phenomena. As such he was everywhere worshipped on the highest mountains, on whose summits he was considered to be enthroned. Homer describes him in power greater than all the Gods put together. The Romans had domestic altars where burnt offerings were made to Zeus. He is called the father of Gods and men, giver of victory and ruler of the world. No deity received such world-spread worship. The eagle and the oak were sacred to Zeus, the eagle, together with the sceptre and lightning, also one of his customary attributes. The most famous statue of Zeus in antiquity was erected by Phidias in gold and ivory for the temple at Olympia, with a divine expression of the highest dignity and benevolence, as if listening to prayer. It is one of the seven wonders of the world. The Romans offered oblations to the dead like the Hindu, which is designated *du manes* and the word *Mantika* is used by the Greeks for the art of divination. The belief of the ancient Hindus that the sages knew everything by meditation and prayer and dreams is traced in Greece and Rome. Prophesying from stars did not become known in Greece till the time of Alexander the Great. Winds were regarded by Greeks and Romans as divine beings. In Rome the tempests had a sanctuary of their own with regular sacrifices at the *Porta Capena*, founded in 259 B. C. The tower of the winds is still standing in excellent condition at Athens. They believed in ambrosia, the food of the Gods conferring and preserving immortality. The Greeks borrowed the art of weaving from the Orientals.

*Donald A. Macenzie's "Myths of Greco and Pre-Hellenic Europe", pp. 172, 163-64 and 178.

It is universally admitted that Greece and Europe came in direct contact with India through trade, and after Alexander's invasion, very much with Indian literature, mythology and religion etc. Alexandria then, in the time of the great conqueror, became famous as the great library and soon came to be recognised as the true intellectual capital of the Hellenic world. Whatever the critics may say, unbiassed European scholars admit that the Ancient Indians were the pioneers in religion, science and literature. The Asiatic luxuries introduced in Europe were the true cause of the downfall of Greece and Rome. The Greeks were familiar with the practice of multiplying copies of books by transcription, either for public or private use. The Athenians had a special market place in the fifth Century B. C. The Hindu religious practices are nothing strange, but they were accepted by the Western nations as they came in contact with them. The principle of monogamy was predominant as early as the Homeric age. The Homeric powers represent the son as leaving the choice of wife to his father and the father as disposing at will of his daughter's hand. The suitor usually offered to pay the girl's father a certain number of oxen or other objects of value*. This is absolutely a Hindu idea. The word *Mitra*, which is prefixed to *Baruni*, the mother of the two renowned sages, *Agastya* and *Vasistha*, explains the custom of using a veil by women. It cannot be overlooked that the double temple in honour of *Rama* or *Ram* and of *Venus* or *Sita* being consecrated on the 21st April, the *Romanavami* day, between the old Forum and Colosseum, supports the words of the great Professor *Max Muller* and his critic that the Trojan War was copied from the *Ramayana*. Romantic narratives, it is admitted, appear among the Greeks and Romans after the time of Alexander the Great when they were brought into direct contact with the East.

'Heaven first taught letters for some wretch's aid
Some banished lover or some captive maid
They live they speak they breathe what love inspires
Warm from the soul and faithful to its fires
The virgin's wish, without her fears, impart,
Excuse the blush and pour out all the heart
Speech the soft intercourse from soul and soul,
And waft a sigh from Indus to the Pole'—(Pope)

The appointment of the priests required some qualifications among the Hindus and consequently they went through regular courses of training and teaching in the monasteries under proficient teachers. A number of state cults were handed over to each of the individual classes and associations. A distinguished position was attained by the sage who superintended the entire ritual and was known by the name of *Brahma*. Priests were the technical advisers of the state and

* *Ide* p. 376.

the people on any new questions that arose in regard to it. The students who learned under a distinguished teacher received his patronymic Gotra. The kings, likewise, were distinguished with the following of worship with the distinction of descending from the moon or the sun. The aim of early Indian education was supposed to be the harmonious development of mind, spirit and body alike. The importance of education in a monastery rests in the fact that many great men of the age connected with the Vedic hymns and Epic structure were the pupils of such monasteries, the ideal *alma maters* of the ancient order of teachers and priests.

In solitude men find ample time for contemplation and active exercise of the understanding, and find leisure for the agreeable task of teaching their young, sincere pupils, engaged to help them as their own children. The schools were then not in cities, where children could daily witness the thousand examples of discipation, immorality, indolence and luxury. The religious observances and examples of the sages in the monasteries placed before the young students practical examples of ideal lives, as examples are better than precepts. The Ancient Indian students learnt everything from them. They were very active, not only in body and mind but in soul. The dwellers in the ancient monasteries of India thus performed the important part of reclaiming the forests as well as training the children. The young students performed the household duties,—tending cattle, drawing water, etc,—and received the patronymic Gotra of their preceptor, then considered a very high distinction. These priests very soon attained the distinguished position and power of king-makers and religious preceptors of the whole nation. The priests received large presents of corn, land and well-known horses as fees from their pupils or for performing sacrifices for the kings or conquerors.

India afforded ample opportunities for the vanquished people to found colonies to escape subjection to the detested enemy. It might have been as a sequel to either civil or religious disorders, or to establish trade relations with the bordering and foreign countries. A person of distinction was chosen to guide the immigrants and make all necessary arrangements for their settling in a new place. It was, however, an old custom to send out inoffensive men in advance to settle, with the purpose of securing new conquests. But a novel method was employed in the case of the conquest of Ceylon by employing herds of domesticated monkeys, with everything necessary for helping the army of conquest of the Ramayana. The religious recluses did their best to colonise the forest, full of wild beasts and cannibals. They were often rewarded with the priesthood of the conquering heroes. All the

ancient deities reflected the habits of life of their worshippers, and retained traces of savage conceptions after they assumed benevolent attributes among cultured people. In shaping gods the early people made them ideals of what they sought or feared most. Hence one finds that animal-headed supernatural beings are depicted in cave drawings and in mythology.

The process of evolution was from great powerful beast to the great man. Narasingha Avatar killed Hiranya Kasipu. Demeter at Phigilia was horse-headed, and there were serpents in her hair. It was chiefly, however, as a provider of the food supply that Demeter was addressed. Demeter's connection with the underworld emphasizes her character as a Fate—a goddess of birth and death, who controlled and measured the lives of mankind. Demeter's great festival was called the Eleusina, the legendary explanation being that it was first celebrated at Eleusis, in Attica. One of its features was the mystic ceremony of initiation. Undoubtedly in Pre-Hellenic Greece, an ancient myth in which Demeter is associated, not with the young god Dionysus, who links with Osiris, Attis, and Tammuz, but with a young goddess. In India the story of Sita, who was an incarnation of Lakshmi, is suggestive in this connection. This heroine of the Ramayana, having served her purpose on earth, departs to the Underworld. In India, which suffers at one season from great heat and drought, he conceived the Drought Demon, which imprisoned the fertilizing waters in a mountain cave. Just when the world is about to perish, the god Indra comes to its rescue armed with his thunderbolt. He attacks and slays the demon, exclaiming

I am the hurler of the bolt of thunder

For man flow freely now the gleaming waters

After this thunder-battle, rain descends in torrents, the withered grass sprouts luxuriantly, and the rice harvest follows. (Britta's death is referred to)

In Babylonia the demon is the water-monster Tiamat, who enters the Euphrates and causes it to flood. She is slain and cut up by Mero-dach, who thus sets the world in order. Then the farmer sows his seeds. In Egypt the inundation of the Nile is brought about by Ra, who, having undertaken to destroy his human enemies, relents and withdraws the waters so that seeds may be cast in the fertilized soil and the harvest gathered in season. Pious worshippers of the deities who controlled the forces of nature were expected to perform ceremonies and offer sacrifices to assist or propitiate them. Thus the local forms of religion were shaped by local phenomena, of which the myths are

reflections. The custom of effecting a ceremonial connection with a Holy place still survives.

"Every weapon has its demon," runs an old Gaelic axiom. In the Indian Epics, the Mahabharata and the Ramayana, the spirits of celestial weapons appear before the heroes, to whom they are gifted by deities, in attitudes signifying their willingness to render obedient and helpful service. Discovery has also been made of what appears to have been the Magdalenian "bull-roarer". In Australia this implement is used to invoke spirits at initiation and other ceremonies, and elsewhere to raise the wind, that is, to compel the attention of the wind-god. The Egyptian sistrum similarly summoned the god when it was tinkled in temples. In India the ritualistic Brahmans performed magical acts to prevent the demons intercepting sacrifices intended for the Gods. The Egyptian and Babylonian priests practised magic to influence the gods. The fusion of religion and magic gave rise to many complex practices and systems of belief.

In India the gods were prominent in the Vedic period and during the post-Vedic period goddesses ceased to be vague. They became the outstanding personalities as "Great Mothers". The religious history of the human race has been marked by stages—Naturalism, Totemism, Animism, Demonology, Monotheism—but it cannot be suggested that human thoughts did not accumulate strata of ideas in regular sequence in any scientific way like Geology or Archaeology. The Chinese, who are reputed to be the oldest nation famous for their conservatism, have specialised as ancestor worshippers. The religious stages of the world cannot be explained by any defined hypothesis. The law of descent by the male or female or the form of worship are relics of very great importance in tracing the social and religious significance of a nation. There is a view that in all primitive communities matriarchal conditions preceded patriarchal and likewise in the matter of the worship of gods and goddesses. But Hindus of the spiritual world attach greater importance to the teacher and interpreter of a religion, who invests them with spiritual lives. The ancestors find the general path, for many are worshipped. The Indian Yama, who like a colt kicked his nursing step-mother Chaya (Prakrati), leads man along the way after death and became the God of the dead and incarnation of piety. His sons are Nara and Narayana of Puranic mythology, called Dhata and Bidhata. In other words, the ideal man of the world is always afraid of the God of death and the day of judgment and Narayana, the mentor and guide of the soul who will guide the world in the last journey to Heaven and Paradise. A patriarch or teacher used to be worshipped in this way and was transformed into a deity. It is said

that certain Gods descended from Heaven to teach the world by examples for certain periods killing the enemies of humanity. These were the incarnation of God.

In the Indo-Aryan periods ages were developed into doctrinal stages of (Dharm) piety called Yugas. Markandeya, one of the deathless sages of Indian mythology, was a worshipper of Narayana and author of a Purana, and is mentioned in the Mahabharata. He conceived the grand idea of popularising Narayana worship under the Samkhya system of philosophy, first propounded by Kapila. The idea of dividing the ages with the growing ends of civilisation by ideas of Gods and heroes no longer appealed to him. The idea of Narayana, immersed in meditation as Creator with the help of Maya illusion and destroying the fearful demons, did not appeal to him as it did not satisfy the general body of worshippers. Maya was represented in the Mother goddess (Adya Sakti), which roused Narayana from his slumber after the great deluge and became the embodiment of all the strength and attributes of gods, worshipped riding on a lion with eight hands representing the winds of eight directions (four corners and four sides) full of weapons and energy. Narasinghadev of Satya Yuga was reversed into the Goddess Singhabhimini, a girl of exquisite beauty and spirit, riding on a lion, who killed the buffalo, the votive offering of sacrifices, and charmed the powerful demons into weak frail creatures to fall at her feet and become victims of death. No Vedic sacrifices, sacrificers or heroes were sought to accomplish the end.

The four different ages of Puranic conceptions were devoted to the gods, heroes on caste influence of different ages, and Greece followed suit in the Trojan heroes. The ancient teachers of Hindu religion framed myths expounding timely forms of the doctrine of the world's ages. No thunder or lightning or celestial weapon was used in the wars of the Asuras, the destruction by Singhabhimini or Durga or Mahishamaradini. The priestly sages had no cause for grievance, for the odes to the great goddess of Heaven's energy appealed better than the hymns of the Vedas and are still prevalent all over India with unabated zeal. There are now thousands and thousands who recite Chandi as it used to be with the Vedas in the time of the performance of sacrifices. The great Indian Epics grew in the heyday of sacrifices. The sacrifices were, no doubt, fire worship at first till fire became the medium of offering oblations to the God. Kapila wanted to replace the elementary fire with the spiritual one of knowledge, and burning was made a sort of punishment or trial. Erring priests and wives in ancient times were burnt at the stake. Ancients believed that all the forces of evil men are let loose at times of seasonal change,

and human beings, their wealth and domesticated animals specially required to be protected against those evil forces. The worship of the goddess takes place even in these seasons. These were symbolised as luck ceremonies in later days.

The Vedic sages ascribed heroic deeds to Indra, and the connection of Ahalya with Indra was explained away as an allegory at the sacrifice in his Tantra Vartika (I 3, 4 (a)). In the Ramayana, Rama exonerated Ahalya by accepting hospitality at her hands of what her husband named for his acceptance. Ahalya was the mother of Sata-nanda, the priest of Janaka and father of Sita. The Rig Vedic king Dīyodasa was the brother of Ahalya, married to Goutama. Dasaratha and Divodasa were contemporaneous kings. Bhaiḍwaja was the son of Brihaspati through his brother's wife. Mamata was instrumental in Pratardana's recovering his paternal kingdom of Benares from the Haihayas and Taljānghas. Pratardana went to the coronation of Rama. It is mentioned in the Ramayana. All these settle the important question of the age in which the heroes of the Ramayana and the Mahabharata lived and moved. The imaginary period of Puranic Mannāntaras cannot be established. They are merely exaggerations.

The Mahabharata opens with the account of the monastery of Ayodhyadharmya, where students received literary, moral, social, scientific, religious and philosophic instruction. It was a time when parents were not the instructors of their children and were not favourably approved of by society. Gotra naturally does not therefore follow the descent but that of the name of a teacher as a rule. The descendant was then distinguished with the name of the great progenitors, such as Bhargava, Angirasa, Vasistha, Kasyapa, etc. The students performed the functions of children to those retired sages of the hermitages in every way. They were protected by their preceptors and in return they wholeheartedly tried to protect them and their family and Gotra prestige. Students were tried by their preceptors as to their morality, moderation and culture before they were discharged from those monasteries. Sometimes they rewarded the pupils with their daughters to continue the important position of the preceptors in those institutions. Brihaspati's son Kacha received lessons from Bhrigu's son.

Atri's son Dattatreya's great disciple was Kartavīrjara, the king of Haihayas, a great Kshatriya king of kings. He was represented with a thousand hands, which might mean the number of Feudatory Chiefs under him. He was not a respecter of Brahmanas or performer of sacrifices. He was admonished by the God's messenger, the wind, but in vain. He killed the descendant of Bhrigu, Jamadagni, whose son

Parasurama avenged his father's death, not only by killing Kartavirjara but by exterminating the race of the Kshatriyas twenty-one times. He killed his mother at the instance of his father and was expiated at the shrine, near the great field Kurushetra, where many decisive battles were fought from time immemorial. The reciter of the Mahabharata represented that he was coming from that shrine Samanta Panchaka, alluding to the shrine where great events of the past took place. The great Kasyapa followed the method of Baman, the incarnation of God, who transferred Bali from Heaven to Patala, an infernal region, for his great vanity in distributing great wealth at the religious sacrifices he undertook.

Parasurama is said to be an incarnation of God blessed with immortality. His weapon was the axe. It was evidently of remote origin. In the proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archaeology Vol. XXII, pp. 300-301, the axe appears to be a symbol in the pre-historic remains of the funeral caves of the Marne of Scandinavia and America. Small axes were used as charms in Malta and elsewhere, and in the Congo the sacred axe survives even now. Votive axes have been found in Cretan graves and sanctuaries. Mr. Legg is of the opinion that the symbolic use of the axe goes back to the Neolithic and perhaps the Palaeolithic Age. The sword of the Scots-Irish folk-hero Finn-mac-Coul was called 'Mac-an-Luid', Rama of the Ramayana is adopted by the spirits of his celestial weapon, Krishna for his disc (Sudarshan Chakra), Arjuna for his celestial weapon of Siva, which were named.

Parasurama was convinced of his great guilt and thought of expiating his sins by sacrifice. Kasyapa officiated in the sacrifice of Parasurama to expiate his sins and Kasyapa officiated as his chief priest. As his honorarium he asked him to give him all that he conquered by the feat of his arms and to retire to an island outside the world of the gift named. This was done and all the Kshatriya princes who hid in the provinces of Bengal and Behar and Orissa were re-installed on their fathers' thrones by Kasyapa. The very object of Parasurama's matricide was not only frustrated but added fuel to the fire by the cruel destruction of the powerful kings and princes, leaving their female members at the mercy of the world. This was recited in the Mahabharata, Shanti Parva Chapter L(50).

The name of Kasyapa is well-known as the progenitor of Devas, Asuras, Daitas, human beings, etc., and he thus saved the Kshatriya race from extinction. But it is clearly said that he revived the Kshatriya race. The Queen with the young princes and princesses took shelter in Vaisya, with goldsmith, artisan and Sudra families as well as

in the hermitages of Parasara and Gautama. They were hidden in cowpens and were reared by kine and even wild bears. It then became apparent to them to organise society on rigid rules of marriage. They were not then formed on religious, moral and social decorum, due to the proposed devastating extermination of the Kshatriya race. The name of Kasyapa was as important in the Ancient Epic as the progenitor of Devas, Daityas, Asuras, Danabas, men, etc., as the reviver of the Kshatriya race, and putting control on promiscuity amongst men and women. His co-wives demonstrated the miseries of life and the fight of step-children resulted in disaster and ruin.

It undoubtedly inculcates the belief that true love does not consist in loving what is mortal in the body of a man or a woman but what is eternal, the soul within. The divine love is reflected in the ideal Purusha Nara, who was revealed to Narayana as an illustrious sage, the hymn maker of the Rig Veda, the divider of the Vedas for the performance of sacrifices not with human or animal flesh to propitiate god but with the selfish, frail body with which a god was used to be represented, fond of Soma juice and oblations in a sacrifice and founder of the Barnasrama religion in India. A harmony between two forms of Indo-Aryan worship was thus established in the Barnasrama religion, and its acceptance by the people is recorded in the Samhita or Hindu institutes.

The introduction of the Narayana cult, apart from its contribution to the racial struggle, was the means by which reconciliation was brought about between two different forms of worship among the Indo-Aryans. In this connection it is necessary to recount the episode of Kapila. Kapila was the grandson of Svyambhuva Manu through his daughter, but it appears that he was not attached to any special tribe or line of kings as a priest. He asked for land from the Creator which was not given to him. In anger he cursed his progenitor and plunged the world under an untimely deluge. He destroys both Devajajna and Pitriajajna and establishes a religious path of renunciation through knowledge as the best means of liberation. He destroyed the numerous children of Sagara, who came to fetch the sacrificial horse which strayed into his (hermitage) Ashrama. It was left to Bhagiratha, who took the river Ganges into Bengal across the kingdom of Panchala to Kapila's hermitage, to secure the redemption of the children of Sagara, his ancestors, from the utter ruin caused by Kapila's curse. The great philosopher Kapila lived on the seaside and had his hermitage in Bengal, and Tamralipta or Tamlook was an old sea port. Bengal is proud of Kapila's shrine and his conception of the philosophic creator of the Universe on the vast ocean, the empire of Baruna, the God of Gods,

resting on the hood of a monster serpent, Vasuki, whom the ignorant believed to have held the earth, soaring in the sky on the back of a monster bird, Garuda, who defeated the great king of gods Indra, snatching ambrosia from him, a feat not accomplished even by the great powerful invulnerable Asuras

The Brahmins were now thrown on the defensive. They had to modify their earlier beliefs with regard to animal sacrifices, and also to accept the view that the charges for the performance were excessive and wrong. The dialogue between Syama Rashmi and Kapila, between the old school of thought and the new Brahmin school of philosophy which laid stress on Yoga as a means of salvation, deserves careful study. That it is important as an introduction to the Bharata Samhita would be manifest from the reference to the summary of the contents quoted already, in which it is said that in the Bharata Samhita "has also been described He who is Adhyatma and who partakes of the attributes of the five elements and He to whom unmanifested and other words cannot be applied. And also He whom the Yogis possessed of meditation and tapas behold in their hearts as the reflection of an image in a mirror." Bengal is proud of this conception of god Narayana, which has no parallel in any of the scriptures of other nations of the world. Narayana stood as the hero ideal of Aryan Gods, before whom the great Kapila in his shrine sacrificed his vicious circle of self with the pleasures of the senses to realise the higher self within and to hold communion with the spirit which transcends the great creation.

Happy are they who dream of life for higher things than merely those possessions of earth and self! A man should lament at having to die sooner or later without enjoyment and the gratification of the senses—this is neither philosophy nor religion. The first office of wisdom must be to make due valuation of things and their due relations and use them according to their worth. It is then that man sacrifices his body and self for the happiness and joy of realising the soul and spirit of the universe. This is the sacrifice which the ancient seers enjoyed in their hermitage and produced pupils who composed Vedic hymns and philosophies of their time to bring out truth. The kings performed the public sacrifices for the good of the country and the people realised their greatness to see that the surplus money of the tributes of the people was used for their good, the propagation of religion and encouraging educational institutions and their worthy students. The priests and kings of Ancient India were all learned men of their day, famous for their piety and divine knowledge. The stages of human life were divided like the seasons of the year. The seasons of childhood, youth, manhood and old age were the great gifts of God,

material changes necessary for the success of life through culture and experience. The great teachers and the patriarchs of the early days knew the proper use of time and taught them properly for realising the soul and the spirit within and without the world and to hold communion with the Creator of this Universe. Lord Bacon said

"Homer hath given more men their livings than either Scylla of Caesar or Augustus ever did, notwithstanding their great largesses and donations, and distribution of lands to so many legions, and no doubt it is hard to say whether arms or learning have advanced greater numbers. And in case of sovereignty we see that if arms or descent have carried away the kingdom, yet learning hath carried the priesthood, which ever hath been in some competition with Empire."

Shakespeare described the priesthood of Europe as follows —

"Attend, This holy fox or wolf or both—for he is equal ravenous. As he is subtle, and as prone to mischief. As able to perform it."

The holy sages of Ancient India did not tally with the description of the Western priesthood and it is only natural to infer that the Aryans of India did not come from the West. The holy sages of India first conceived the idea of religion in their secluded hermitage and Kapila was the father of the great Indian Philosophy of religion Samkhya. The great Indian Epic owes its existence to it.

The story which is cited below gives an important clue to the reason which gave rise to metaphysical speculations and as the theme is developed one would notice also the other and probably more important urge for formulating a new school of thought.

The story cited in the Mahabharata proceeds in the following manner —

"We have heard that in days of Yore when the god Vrastr came to the place of king Nahusa, the latter for satisfying the duties of hospitality was on the point of slaying a cow in accordance with the true ancient and eternal injunction of the Vedas."

"Kapila of liberal soul, seeing the cow tied for slaughter ever following Sattwik duties, always engaged in controlling his senses, endowed with true knowledge and sparing in diet, having gained an excellent understanding, that was characterised by faith, perfectly fearless, beneficial, firm, and ever directed towards truth uttered Alas ye Vedas! At that time a sage by name Syuma Rashmi, entering the form of the cow addressed the Yogi Kapila saying,—'Silence O Kapila'."

"If the Vedas are censurable, whence have those other duties come to be regarded as authoritative, men given to penance and endowed with intelligence, and who have the Shrutis and knowledge, for their eyes consider the injunction of the Vedas, which have been declared through and compiled by the sages to be the words of God himself?"

The dialogue which follows between these two sages gives clear and concise views of the orthodox and of the new heterodox school on which the Bharata Samhita is based. The views of the orthodox school were, according to Syuma Rashmi, that one should celebrate sacrifices

from desire of Heaven. Altogether seven (domestic) and seven (wild) animals are declared fit for sacrifice. One who celebrates sacrifices leading to Heaven acquires greater rewards in the next world in the form of heavenly bliss. The next item of the faith of the orthodox school was that the householder who supports the other orders of life lives the highest and the best kind of life. He challenges those who maintain that domesticity cannot bring on the acquisition of liberation. Only those who have no faith and wisdom and penetration, only those who have no reputation, who are idle and toilworn, who have misery in their lot on account of their pristine deeds, only those who are destitute of learning, see the profusion of tranquility in a life of mendicancy.

The three classes of Pitris, the Archismats, the Varushads and the Kriyads, approve of the necessity of mantras about the dead, and the mantras are regarded as powerful causes.

The false doctrine of incorporeal existence called emancipation, seemingly consistent with truth, but subversive of the real meaning of the injunctions of the Vedas, has been introduced by learned men shorn of prosperity and eaten up by idleness. The Brahman who celebrates sacrifices according to the injunctions of the Vedas is never seduced by sin. Through sacrifices such a person acquires high regions of happiness along with the animals he has killed in those sacrifices, and himself, pleased by the acquisition of all his wishes, succeeds in pleasing those animals by fulfilling their wishes. By neglecting the Vedas, by guile or by deception, one never succeeds in attaining to the supreme. On the other hand it is by practising Vedic rites that one succeeds in attaining to Brahma.

The views of Kapila as enunciated by him are given below —

"I do not censure the Vedas. I do not wish to disparage them. We have heard that the different classes of duty laid down for the different modes of life, all lead to the same end. The Sannyasin attains to a high end, the hermit also attains to a high end, both the other two also, viz, the householder and the Brahma charin attain to the same end. The Vedas lay down, perform Acts, they also declare — 'Do not perform acts'. If abstention from act produces merit then their performance must be highly reprehensible. When the scriptures say this the strength or weakness of particular sayings must be very difficult to determine. Seeing that all the fruits that can be gained by acts are inestimable, instead of being eternal, Yotis by adopting selfcontrol and tranquility attain to Brahma through the path of knowledge. There is nothing in any of the worlds that can stand in their way. They have, in their own understanding, formed fixed conclusions regarding all destructible objects and at a life of Renunciation, devoted to Brahma and already at one with Brahma, they have taken refuge in Brahma. Getting over grief and freed from the quality of darkness their acquisitions are eternal. When the high end of these men is within reach of attainment, what need has one for performing the duties of the domestic mode of life.

"There are the Darsha, the Paurana Masha, the Agnihotra, the Chaturmashya and other rites which intelligent men should perform. Eternal merit consists in their performance. Those that have adopted the Sanyasa mode of life, who abstain from all acts, who are endued with patience, who are cleansed, and who are conversant with Brahma, succeed by such knowledge or Brahma in satisfying the debts to the gods, (also the Pitris and the Rishis), described to be so very fond of libations poured in sacrifice. The very gods become stupefied in finding out the path of that pathless person who forms himself the soul of all creatures and who regards all creatures impartially. Through instructions delivered by the preceptor one knows that which lives within this body to be of a four fold nature, having besides four doors and four mouths. In consequence of two arms the organ of speech the stomach, and the organ of pleasure, the very duties are to have four doors. One should, therefore, do his best to keep those doors under control. One should not gamble with dice. One should not appropriate others' properties. One should not officiate at the sacrifice of a person of a mean birth. One should not, yielding to anger, smite another with hands or feet. That intelligent man who acts thus is said to have his hands and feet well governed. One should not make loud abuse or censure. One should not speak useless words. One should forbear from knavery and from accusing others. One should observe the vow of truthfulness, be sparing of speech and always careful. By acting thus one will have his organ of speech well-governed. One should not abstain entirely from food. One should not eat too much. One should give up covetousness, and always seek company of the good. One should eat only, so much as is necessary for keeping life. By acting thus one succeeds in properly governing the door represented by his stomach. One should not, O hero, out of lust take another wife when he has a wedded wife. One should never call a woman to bed except in her season. One should confine himself to his own married spouse without seeking union with other women. By acting thus one is said to have his organ of pleasure properly governed. That wise man is truly a regenerate person who has all his four doors, viz., the organ of pleasure, the stomach the two arms (and two feet) and the organ of speech properly governed. Everything becomes useless of that person whose doors are not well governed. Of what avail are the penances of such a man? Of what avail are his sacrifices? What can be gained by his body? The gods consider him a Brahmana who has cast off his upper garment, who sleeps on the naked earth, who makes his arm a pillow and whose heart is endued with tranquility. That person who, given to contemplation, singly enjoys all the happiness that married couples enjoy, and who pays no attention to the joys and griefs of others, should be known as a Brahmana. That man who properly understands all this as it really is and its various metamorphoses, and who knows what the end is of all created objects, is known by the gods as a Brahmana. One who entertains no fear from any creature and from whom no creature has any fear, and who forms himself the soul of all creatures, should be known as a Brahmana. Without having gained purity of heart, which is the true end of all religious acts, such as gifts and sacrifices, the greatest, the men of foolish understandings do not succeed in acquiring a knowledge of what is necessary in making one a Brahmana even when explained by preceptors. Shorn of a knowledge of all this, these men desire fruits of a different sort, viz. Heaven and its joys. Unable to practise even a small part of that good conduct which has descended from remote times, which is eternal, which is characterised by certainty, which enters as a thread in all our duties, and by following which men of knowledge belonging to all the modes of life convert their respective duties and penances into dreadful weapons for killing the ignorance and evils of worldliness, men of foolish understandings regard acts which yield visible fruits, which are fraught with the highest power, and that are deathless, as fruitless after all and as

deviations not sanctioned by the Scriptures. In sooth, however, that conduct comprising practices the very opposite of those that are seen in times of distress, is the very essence of carefulness and is never affected by lust and anger and other passions of a similar nature. About sacrifices again, it is very difficult to determine all their particulars. If ascertained, it is very difficult to follow them in practice. If practised, the fruits which they beget are terminable. Mark this well."

The new school of thought with which the Bharata Samhita is identified is thus very clearly propounded by Kapila. In it we find that the position of the upholder of the sacrifices has been assailed from several points of view. The Brahmin who urges the king to perform sacrifices in the hope of reward of heaven is not the real Brahmin. If the origin of the word Brahmin is sought in the early Vedic literature, he will be seen to have been one who supervises the rituals and ceremonies at the sacrifices. The new school would not call such a skilled performer of sacrifices, a Brahmin. The real Brahmin is one who, given to contemplation singly enjoys all the happiness and who pays no attention to the joys and griefs of others. The sacrifices which were undertaken with the object of a reward, either on the part of the priest or on the part of the performer, are declared valueless from the spiritual point of view. The life of a householder may be regarded as a socially useful institution, but the life of a Sanyasi must be esteemed to be of higher spiritual value. The limited and variable spiritual benefit which a householder derives from the performance of sacrifices depend upon the measure of his moral goodness.

The ethical code laid down in this connection is of great importance in reference to the earlier period of Vedic sacrifices, during which these are undertaken by kings and sages who did not attach much value to the moral virtues of forbearance and selflessness. Only a person who is given to Yoga, who has satisfied all his duties, who is capable of roving everywhere, depending only on his own body, who has brought his soul under perfect restraint, who has gone above the requirements of the science of morality and who disregards the whole world, can transgress the declarations of the Vedas regarding acts, and say that there is liberation.

Now the philosophical background of this system of Kapila is further explained in a beautiful manner by Vasistha in a dialogue between him and king Janaka of Videha. This is what he says —

"Listen now to me, O king, as to how the subject of liberation has been explained among the great persons conversant with the Samkhya and the Yoga system of philosophy. That which the Yogins behold is exactly what the Samkhyas strive after to attain. He who sees the Samkhya and the Yoga system to be one and the same is said to be gifted with intelligence.

"Skin, flesh, blood, fat, bile, marrow and sinews and those senses of which you were speaking to me, exist. Objects originate from objects, the senses from the

senses. From both one acquires a body as a seed is obtained from seed. When the supreme being is without senses, without matter, without body, he must be divested of all qualities and on account of his being so how indeed can he have qualities of any kind. Either and other qualities originate from the qualities of goodness and darkness and ignorance and disappear in the end in them. Thus the qualities arise from nature and disappear in nature. The individual soul and the universe are said to both partake of nature characterised by the three qualities of goodness, darkness and ignorance. The supreme soul is different from both the individual soul and the universe. As the seasons, though having no forms, are nevertheless inferred from the appearance of particular fruits and flowers, similarly Nature, though formless, is inferred from the principles of goodness and the rest that originates from it.

This school of philosophy is traced to Kapila, who flourishes in the age of Svyambhuya Manu. If the chronology between the times of Uddalaka Aruni and Kapila is carefully examined, he will be found to have preceded the latter by about 250 or 300 years. Kapila is a contemporary of Srigara and Uddalaka Aruni is a contemporary of Kalmasapada and Janmejaya I. Between them there intervenes a few generations.

Many are the stories which centre round Uddalaka Aruni. He is commissioned by his preceptor Ayoddhahumnya to block a leaking dam and he does this with his own body as no other way presents itself to him. After passing through a period of great hardship, he leaves his preceptor's Ashrama as a great Vedic scholar. His son Svetaketu is mentioned in the *L'p'ic* as having introduced marriage and ended the non-married state by decrees by which he forbade adultery and desertion on both sides during the married state. But though Svetaketu effects an important social change, he is nevertheless instructed by his father Uddalaka Aruni into the initial stage of metaphysical inquiry. The Upanishads mention the name of Nachiketa as the son of Uddalaka Aruni. Nachiketa, who is thirsting for knowledge, utilises his sojourn in the underworld to question Yama, the god of death, about the state after death and the beyond and learns from him the doctrine of the immortality of the Atman. In the Mahabharata, Nachiketa asks to see the paradise of the cow-givers and Yama delights him with a long lecture upon the merit which one acquires by presenting cows. The Upanishads contain stories, most of which are treated in a more practical way in the Mahabharata.

The devotion of students to their preceptor astonished the gods when Upamanyu would not accept the boon from Asvins to regain his lost eyesight through the eating of certain leaves (*Arka-Patra*) without the order of his preceptor.

The great sages interested in the new school of thought occupy not a relevant mention in the theme of the Mahabharata, but in the Bharata Samhita, which is connected with the new school of thought as well as with the old and tries to reconcile the two fundamentally divergent views. The continuity of Aryan thought is a very well-known fact and there is no disagreement among scholars on this point. The Vedic hymns which one finds in the Rig Veda were prayers by which the various gods and goddesses, who were manifestations of one great God, were propitiated by the sages who composed them. These hymns describe the attributes and functions of the various Vedic deities who were invoked by the mortals. The Brahmanas were made as commentaries of the Vedas with many religious precepts and maxims entitled Sruti. Next came Smriti or sacred traditions Upanishads and Aranyakas, theological works of great importance. The Upanishads mark the first step in the direction towards the attainment of knowledge. It was the outcome of the spirit of questioning with which many of the Kshatriyas was filled. The Vedanta marks the culminating point in the enquiry started for the knowledge of the Supreme Being and its relation to the individual soul.

The philosophy and the metaphysics of the early Aryans were intimately connected with the code of good conduct. There were great literary productions which were not meant for mass education. The general public were entertained in the sacrifice to receive religious instructions. For the convenience of the performers of these sacrifices, so that harmony might rule instead of any fight over anything connected with them, an idea was conceived in the family of the priest that whatever hymns of the Rig Veda would be required in the Soma and horse sacrifices would be divided and known by distinct names of Sama and Yajur Vedas, respectively, and what was tacked and foisted upon the Rig Veda, the latter was separated from it with the name of Atharva Veda. This important part of the work was done by a descendant of Vasistha distinguished by the name of Veda Vyasa.

The Epics, the Ramayana and the Mahabharata, were compiled solely with a view to spread right notions among all classes of people, to introduce harmonious relations between different castes. This was done not only by precepts, but also by examples. The Kshatriyas were instructed as to how to conquer and administer, the Brahmins were taught laws relating to the practice of religion. To the Vaisyas was assigned the duty of increasing the wealth of the people by trade and commerce, and the Sudras be-

came the labouring class and were enjoined to serve the three upper classes. The tillage of the soil also remained in their hands. The Ramayana and the Mahabharata are important as they elucidate an attempt on the part of the Aryan Sages to stabilise a social order which was the result of a long course of social evolution.

Religion consists of two elements, of theory and practice, *i.e.*, a belief in powers higher than man and an attempt to worship them to be happy and prosperous. This faith did not last long. It was set adrift from its old moorings and left to toss on a sea of doubt and uncertainty. Primitive man had no idea of imitation or an image. When an image of a god was made it formed part of his life and was at once a god to him. Such was the simple belief of the primitive man. Lest anyone injure it the name of the deity was not divulged. It was so in Rome and Vabrious Soramus was said to have paid the penalty of death for divulging the name of the God he worshipped. It was so in India and is even now prevalent. Besides, it is a well-known practice among Hindu women even now not to utter the name of their husbands. In many races the name of the king was strictly tabooed owing to the belief that he might be injured, as unpopular kings and people were burnt in effigy. Life was then considered to be distributed equally over the whole of the body or the object, for the worship of relics such as the place where a saint lived or departed his life, his bones, hair, etc., still lingers in shrines.

It is an interesting proposition that intellectual progress is more or less dependent upon economic progress, which often advanced by empire and conquest. The old community was freed from the counsels of a number of timid elders when they came under the sway of a bright intellect. The whims and caprices of a conqueror are sometimes of very great service in breaking the chain of early custom lying heavy on the shoulders of the illiterate people. The magic spell of the public profession of worship has been one of the surest means of human emancipation from the abject thralldom of tradition, to elevate a nation to a truer conception of Aryan life with a broader outlook on the world. The ancient people believed that gods could turn the course of Nature for the benefit of their faithful worshippers. Their gods could work miracles and they were offered oblations in public and private sacrifices to control and direct things as the performers liked. With the breakdown of this school of thought the spirit was defied, the spirit which every natural object possessed was worshipped. The first was Animism or Pasupat cult and the last was Narayana cult, with which Kapila was identified.

The terrible god of vengeance evolves into the merciful god as the race attains higher planes of idealism and ceases to pay tribute to a horde of malignant spirits for extreme malevolence, like snake sacrifice, etc., the extermination of a race. Such was the case in the fight between the Devas and the Asuras. The great King of Gods Indra was dethroned and Nihusa, a king of mortal men, placed on the throne of Heaven. But when presumption and incontinence, to which human flesh and blood are heir, overtook him he was hurled headlong down to perdition. This was the theme of the Bharata Samhita by the author Apantaratama. The supernatural inhabitant of each natural object was regarded as a god. The spirits of the departed were considered to be earthbound and they were worshipped and propitiated. This was the germ of ancestor worship.

The idea of rebirth and transmigration to lower and higher planes of Heaven and Hell, according to the deserts of individuals, was linked up with religion. Malevolent spirits were supposed to feed on the person distressed with misfortune and illness, and sacrifices were undertaken to loosen their hold on him. The old beliefs were being weakened under the influence of Hinduism, which sheltered within its portals monotheists, polytheists and pantheists. Religion commuted good conduct first and classification of society next. Hindus were not then judged by their social status. Many books have been published showing the striking comparison between the gods of Indo-Aryans and the deities worshipped by the Greeks and Romans. Efforts have been made from time to time by European scholars and Census Officers to determine and define just how to realise a genuine Hindu, in the popular acceptance of the term, but the majority of them failed miserably. They should have first realised that, in spite of so many cruel invasions of India by foreign races their attempt by force, or honours or bribes could not convert the country within so many thousands of years.

This is the true formula for realising the truth behind the Hindu religion. Two hundred millions of Hindus profess a religion which must necessarily differ in sects and creeds. The first progress of any religion is bound to be obscure and confused owing to the manifold mythological legends. In common with most other religions of the world, Hindu mythology contains ten incarnations of the God Vishnu. The Vedic triple forms of fire and gods, Fire, Sun and Indra, assumed the Hindu trinity of Brahma, Vishnu and Siva, who were not single but were represented by their co-ordinate wives, carriers and distinct attributes of Creator, Preserver and Destroyer in Satwa, Raja and Tama.

Brahma, a human figure with four heads and arms, is the creator riding on a goose and his wife, the goddess of wisdom and arts, Saraswati, carries in her four hands Veda, a vessel, a beadstring, a spoon, standing on a lotus. There is no symbol of Brahma but he is worshipped mentally.

Vishnu, a human figure with four hands holding a club, a conch, a disc and a lotus, riding on the Garuda Bird, and his consort Lakshmi, seated on an owl, representing health, wealth, beauty and prosperity Salgram Sila is the symbol in which he is worshipped as well as in the Image of His incarnation.

Siva, a hunter, with three eyes, trident in hand and human skull, covered with animal skins, with matted locks, fearful snakes circling round his shoulders against his blue neck, and his wife Durga, of ten arms carrying different arms, with magnificent crown, riding on a lion with her children Kartick and Ganesha.

Siva and Durga were worshipped together in their genital organs, representing creation as well as the cause of destruction by abuse. Durga is popularly known as Anna-Purna, tallying with the name of the Western mythology Anna Perenna and Sri or Lakshmi with Ceres. No reasonable term could be found as to the birth of the consorts of these gods. They were hid in mystery. They were given divine origin.

The society depicted in the Rig-Veda required the consent of a girl's guardian, either parents or elder brother, after the young couple had themselves come to an agreement. Such is the marriage contrast reflected in Ruru's marriage with Pramadbhara in Poulama Parva. Many are the tales about the marriage of Siva and Durga and the birth of their children. The charge of incestuous marriage is levelled against the creator Brahma, service is ascribed to the wife of Vishnu and devotion to the wife of Siva. But it cannot be denied that Hindu marriage has been a Sacrament, and offering oblations in response to the soul of the ancestors has been a religious necessity. The inheritance is through females and legitimate sons. This has been recognised for a very long time. In the case of Brahma's marriage no question arose of inheritance like the Pharaoh who had to marry his sister to establish his right to the throne beyond all question. The charge of incestuous marriage against Brahma is a clear case of sarcasm by the satellites of the worshippers of the other gods. It is borne out in the Pancavimsa Brahmana —

"The Hotr recites loudly the Four hotr-formulas, he thereby holds the recitation following on the laud, (when the Hotr mentally has repeated the verses of the laud,

he recites by way of Sastra (each Stri must be followed by a corresponding Sastra) the Caturbhai formulas. In the manuals of the Ho'r these are given Sankh. XII 1 and At. Br. V 25 13 A. V. VII 13 9 10) for that is no laud which is not followed by a recitation (13) *

* They abuse (The abusing of Prajapati consists according to Brāhmayana (IX 1 17 18) either in mentioning the evil deeds of Prajapati or in repeating the evil fact done by Prajapati as recorded by the Adhvaryus and the Bṛhvelins. Of the Bṛhvelins is known the tale of the incest of Prajapati (At. Br. III 13 ap. below VIII 2 10 and Sat. Br. 174 Apastamba XVI 12) besides several Prajapatiparivāda mantras e.g., yat-stenaṁ vad-yaṁ dāman-masāṁ an-vad-aghayarāṁ tad-ut-va-jnam tv-eta-d-va-tam etan-na-ma-matam. Prajapati now that they have got hold of him this (fact) is now (probably into the place occupied in the sentence by etan-matam) etad belongs to the preceding, not to apamānam) proclaimed by them (as they think) 'we have got hold of him' (14)

To a great extent it can be explained in the words of Professor Max Muller—

Several centuries before Buddha, Visvamitra, who, like Buddha, was a member of the royal caste, had to struggle against the exclusiveness of the priests. At that early time, however, the position of the Brahmins was no yet impregnable and Visvamitra, although a Kshatriya, succeeded in gaining for himself and his family the rights for which he struggled and which the Brahmins had previously withheld from all but their own caste. King Janaka of Videha again, whose story is given in the Brahminas, refused to submit to the hierarchical pretensions of the Brahmins and asserted his right of performing sacrifices without the intercession of priests †

The growth and establishment of priesthood and formation of castes on the basis of the ability, power, training and culture of the different bodies of men pursuing different branches of profession and calling were very important. The hymns of Agastya, Vasistha, Visvamitra are as important as the philosophy of Kapila, Gautama and Vyasa. The genius of Brahmins, the rising power of Kshatriyas, creative faculties of Vaisyas and the wise submissive forbearance of Sudras produced a nation which became distinguished as the pioneer in all branches of learning, philosophy, astronomy, astrology, art, sculpture, trade, commerce, politics, science and religion. The Indo-Aryan policy succeeded in founding new kingdoms, dynasties and overcoming all difficulties in their way.

The labourers were imported and, with the growing civilisation, the happiness of life attracted the attention of the aborigines of the neighbouring countries, who invaded the peaceful countries and carried away food, drink and cattle. They were the invaders and not the Aryans, as Western scholars want to make the world believe for interested motives. Hindu authoritative works say that the Asuras, Danabas, Yakshas, Gandharvas, Rakshasas, Devas and men were all sons of the same father

*Pancarimśa Brāhmana, p. 66

†Professor Max Muller's "Ancient Sanskrit Literature," p. 80.

Kasyapa but by different wives only, and the fight between them was to possess heaven, the best place for happiness and enjoyment, and that they did not come from any different place or country. The ambitious men were called the Asuras and Danabas, Yakshas and Gandharvas were the accumulators of wealth and the masters of the fine arts of music, etc. When the Asuras and Danabas were subdued and in some cases annihilated, the conquerors were called the Devas and the vanquished the Danabas. The men, as allies of the conquerors who helped the just cause, were rewarded with the kingship and priesthood according to the military and spiritual services performed by them. It was for this that Brihaspati and Vasistha officiated for the gods, Kasyapa, Atri, Samba for men, Trishira for the Asuras followed Sukra. Agastya and Kapila did not descend to priesthood. Mandhata and Muchukunda fought with Devas, Rakshas and Kubera and were victorious kings.

It is admitted that Indians were the pioneers of the trade and commerce of the world. The finding of common words in the implements of agriculture proves that Aryan traders took them to the countries to which they travelled for trade and commerce and introduced them there with the original Aryan names. The Veda and Upanishad do not mention that the early Aryans lived naked in caves and among boughs or were a nomadic class of hunters. The word Arya owes its origin to the tilling of the ground. The Aryans built houses, rode horses, used roads and made boats and carts. They visited distant lands over seas and rivers for trade and commerce. They made bridges and excavated rivers and lakes for agriculture and the convenience of inland communication. It is said that the Rig Veda is the ancient record of world civilisation, but it does not give any picture of the life and society of Europe, Africa or America, but only of India. The names of the well-known authors of the Vedic hymns do not bear any resemblance. There is no similarity even in the mode of living, habits, customs or laws between Indians and any other nation of the world. The discoveries of Indian gods, etc., in America, Russia and many other parts of the world bear testimony to their migration and settlement there and the introduction of Phallic or Sun worship. Patriotic European scholars launched a great controversy to prove the seat of the primitive Aryans to have been somewhere other than India. One could have been convinced of all these theories if they could have proved the existence of the very old institution of sacrifices amongst any nations of Europe, Asia or Africa in their daily life, the idea of four stages of life, and attaining of success through due performance of duties. To found an Empire through public sacrifices like Raja-Suya or Asvamedha was to be found only in India,

There is no distinction made between Vyāsa in the Mahābhārata, yet it is held that Bḍāryana Vyāsa and Kṛṣṇa Dṛupadyana were different men. There is no such mention made by any of the commentators of the Mahābhārata. Hence that cannot be accepted. All that one finds is that the author Vyāsa went to Vādarikāśhramā to compose the Mahābhārata (Janmejaya asked him to do so to clear certain doubts raised in his mind) and clearly put in the Adī Parva Chapter LXII, which were answered in Janmejaya's Rājā-Sūya Yajña, described in Harivamśa. It was thus the King was convinced that the cause of the war of Kurukṣhetra was Rājā-Sūya Yajña and nothing else and several instances were quoted as examples. One important fact cannot be overlooked that Bharata, the brother of Rama, forbade him to do Rājā-Sūya in the Uttarakāṇḍa Rāmāyana (Book VII, Canto 96). This also proves the time of the composition of the book in question.

However, the composition of the Mahābhārata entirely rests on the answers to the questions put by king Janmejaya. The name of Vyāsa had long been recognised as a general term of reciter of the holy book in India, and is used even now in the North-Western Provinces. Vyāsa is also held to mean the divider of the Vedas and gains strong ground in the etymology of the word. There is a distinct mention of the son of the sage Parāśara being distinguished as the divider of the Vedas. He was born in a family of Vasiṣṭha. In their family the Indian pontificate, full of great moral, legal and philosophical learning, had been handed down for the last few generations. Vyāsa rendered invaluable services, being the first to make a compromise between the different sages, followers of different cults by dividing the original Rig Veda in such a manner as would be helpful in the performance of the Hindu religious sacrifices. He used the ancient mythological and didactic accounts for the revision of law and introduction of reform in the custom of the country on a national basis.

Veda Vyāsa and Vālmīki, were both of them descended from the family of the well-known priests of India, Vasiṣṭha and Bhṛigu, respectively. They belonged not only to the family of the priest but were connected with the kings of India. Vyāsa was said to be the reviver of the line of the Kurus and Vālmīki or Cyavan was that of Sarjati and Gādi. Agastya also married Lopāmudrā, the daughter of a king. They were all called Maitra Varuna. The reason of their being called thus may be ascertained from their connections with sacrifices, for one finds in the Pancaviṃśa Brahmana a distinct reference that sacrifice became the beau-ideal of religion and Prajapati, having changed himself into it, gave himself over to the gods.

mandhara (gram 31 f. 7) or brahmanah prathastotra is chanted without final ho kalya or uchayakalya prathastotra (gram 31 f. 2 7) is chanted with idaa final ' (a)'. In chanting the midday prayana (hymn) they chant all the stanzas of the midday *prayer* (a).

The Indo Aryan worship went abroad through Indian traders and was established in Egypt Mesopotamia, etc. The origin of the Asuras could also be traced.

At a later period when we come to know more about Mitanni from the letters of one of its kings to the Egyptian Pharaohs and the Winckler tablets from Boghaz-koi it is found that its military aristocracy spoke an Indo-European language as is shown by the names of the kings—Saushtatar Artatama Sutarna, Artashumara Tushratta and Mattuara. They were supposed to follow the following deities—

Mitra Varuna Indra and Nasatyan—

Mitra Varuna Indra and Nasatyan the Twin Aryan—Castor and Pollux,—whose names have been deciphered by Winckler. The Mitanni tribe (the military aristocracy probably was called Khazzi, and some philologists are of opinion that it is identical with Arya which was the normal designation in Vedic literature from the Rig Veda onwards of an Aryan of the three upper classes. Vedic Index of Names and Subjects Macdonell and Keith vol. 1, pp. 61-2 London 1912).

Mitanni signifies 'the river lands' and the descendants of its inhabitants, who lived in Cappadocia, were called by the Greeks 'Matienoi'. "They are possibly," says Dr Haddon, "the ancestors of the modern Kurds", (The Wanderings of Peoples, p. 21) a conspicuously long-headed people, proverbial, like the Ancient Aryo-Indians and the Gauls, for their hospitality and their raiding propensities.

"It would appear that the Mitannian invasion of northern Mesopotamia and the Aryan invasion of India represent two streams of diverging migrations from a common cultural centre and that the separate groups of wanderers mingled with other stocks with whom they came into contact. Tribes of Aryan speech were associated with the Kassite invaders of Babylon who took possession of northern Babylonia soon after the disastrous Hittite raid. It is believed that they came from the east through the highlands of Iran.

For a period, the dating of which is uncertain, the Mitannians were overlords of part of Assyria including Nineveh and even Asshur as well as the district called "Musri" by the Assyrians and part of Cappadocia. They also occupied the cities of Harran and Hadesht.

Professor Max Muller has explained the meaning of the words Deva, Basu, etc., as mere general names of the agents in Nature.

'All these superhuman agents shared in common, they were emphatically called deva, bright, vasu, brilliant, asura, breathing or living and many other names. We saw how this word Deva, meaning originally bright, was gradually divested of its purely physical meaning and instead of meaning brilliant agents, came to mean in the end great and good, or what we now mean by divine agents. The history of that one word deva in Sanskrit and *Deus* in Latin, disclosed, in fact, better than

*Pancharimsa Brahmana, p. 138

†Professor Donald A. Mackenzie's 'Myths of Babylonia and Assyria,' pp. 239-270

EPIC INTER-RELATION WITH THE VEDAS

The Bharata Samhita was composed as the medium of Vedic instruction for the intelligentsia of the Hindu Aryan family of kings, priests and followers. The two great Indian Epics, the Mahabharata and the Ramayana drew their inspiration from the Bharata Samhita but represented distinct changes in Aryan civilisation, in customs, manners, education and religion according to their distinct propagation of the ideals of different cultural centres of India. Western scholars are annoyed and surprised at not finding a connected account of chronology and history amongst the advanced Indo-Aryan family in their literature, but they overlook one significant fact, that the Hindus have been the most conservative lovers of history and chronology and have preserved the link of their connection from the days of the creation in the daily offering of turpan or water to their departed ancestors and seers and in different forms of salutation. Dr Hopkin's article on Hindu salutations is very interesting. He considers them extraordinary. He says, in the case of a traveller crossing the Ganges* or a mountain, this prayer is uttered by his superiors or well-wishers —

"May King Varuna and Yama, winner of conflicts (an old epithet) and Ganga and Yamuna and the mountains give you weal and the Maruts and Asvins and streams and lakes weal to you on the part of gods and demons and vasus, O Ganga, daughter of the mountains shepherded him gopavane 'nam and give thy protection to this king who is about to penetrate into the mountains' (pravi) viksatō eva sailan iman sailasut- urpasya) to which is cannily added to the traveller, 'take care of you self', yatō bhavasya. A benediction for a hero going into battle (7.94.11 f.) begins with invoking protection from Brahman and proceeds with a long list of potential aiders in a rather curious medley, namely priests, the best serpents, sarisrpa's royal sages (enumerated by name Jayati and others acting as protecting saints), creatures with one foot those with many feet and those, with no feet apadakas, Sraha and Svadha and Suci and (Svasti kuryantu te sada Lakshmi, Arundhati, Asita Deralā, Visramitra, Angirasa, Vasistha, Kasyapa, Dhatri Vidhatri lokesa, the Directions and their lords, digisvarah, the six faced Kartikeya, Virasrat, the four elephants of the quarters earth, sky, and planets, and finally the great serpent that supports the earth, adhastad dharanam vo sau sada dharyate nrpa sesa ca pannagasresthah svasti tubhvam prayacchatu."

The invocation sloka seems to have been in the version of the Bharata Samhita of Kapila at the end of Chapter 269 Santi Parva (last verse), under the distinct colophon Gokapihya — "I bow to that

*The Parsis and Hindus make obeisance to rivers at sight or when crossing even now

Brahma which is at one with him who knows him " The patriarch Bhishma thus salutes Visvarupa, and this is still followed and preserved in the daily worship of the Hindus in religious meditation as follows O God ! Thou art the god of the Brahman, the benefactor of the Brahmanas and Cows (the wealth and preserver of sacrifices). These attributes are found in you, Sri Krishna and Gobinda " He has not forgotten to mention in that to bow down to Narayana, the sages and the form of Soma, who gratifies the Gods with nectar in the full-moon fortnight and the Pitris in the next fortnight This Visvarupa in the Mahabharata and Gita is not the creation of any new form of worship or the magic representation of Krishna.

In the Rig Veda Visvarupa Tvastra is mentioned as an authority on sacrifice The difference in the views of Rig and Yajur Vedas about the death of this Tvastra at the hands of Indra for the possession of the cows is prominent The older one *R/K* justifies Indra's action while the latter condemns it as killing a Brahman It is held by learned Western scholars like Kasten Ronnow that the Devas very probably took over the Soma sacrifice from the Asuras Tvastra is clearly in possession of Soma and in the Rig Veda he is nowhere described as a chaplain or purohit, though mentioned as an authority, but in Yajur texts he is In Rig Veda II 23 17th the famous priest of the Gods Brihaspati, is called a son of Tvastra, and both Sathapatha Brahmana and the Mahabharata describe how Tvastra flew into a rage over the murder of Visvarupa It is said that Indra was very angry for Tvastra had married a female Asura. In Rig Veda it is mentioned that Tvastra and Indra are not on friendly terms although the former has got his proper share of the sacrifices There might have been other causes of difference between them, but it seems from the description of the Mahabharata that the last conflict must have been connected with the ritual as it appears within the ritual as a god of fertility. In the Rig Veda verse III 38,4, he appears in the shape of a bull styled Visvarupa The creative activity of the primæval bull is mentioned in verse 5 and is well-known The features of the bull Visvarupa resemble what is in the Parjanya hymn of the Rig Veda VII 101, and d is 6a there The learned Kasten Ronnow translates Rig Veda III 56.4a verse thus—" At the meeting (cohabitation) with them (the cows) he appeared as the leader " In c-d the description is continued thus " The divine waters were in love with him, going separate ways they slipped away from him " (Cf Geldner, *R V Übersetzung*, 1363) To the female beings mentioned here belong the three "mermaids" in verse 5c rtavarir yosanas tisro apyah, cf. also verse 2c These are perhaps the triad Ilā, Sarasvatī, and Bharatī, with whom we frequently meet

and it seems highly probable that they should be identical with the three dhruvā in Rig Veda, x 69, to whom correspond the three prolific bulls, cf. verse 2 —

trivāta sarvā dhanā sam madhumad sam sindhavo mitraduhre
trivāta trivāta trivāta trivāta dhi ananam retasā viduman ah

Ṛta's activity generally consists in providing Heaven and Earth with rupa's. In Rig Veda, x 110, the lotar is to yajyam 10, Agni, is asked to convey to the sacrificial enclosure the one (i.e. Ṛta) who me dya apithva janitri rupam apimad bhuvanani visa. Heaven and Earth, or both Rodasi, are here described as two prolific women (vis-va-ya janitritru), and the Rupa's are their offspring. Ṛta's special activity consists in creating them inside the womb, and Rig Veda, x 184 describes from a cosmic point of view his activity amongst men and animals. The act of procreating is called into existence certain 'Sondergotter', cf. x 184 1 —

visnur vanim kalpayatu tyā a rupam pimatā
a sincentu prajapatir dhatu garbham dadhatu to

and Ṛta is one of these gods. While, however the activities of these other deities are quite obvious his field of action is not quite clearly defined. Eggeling translates these words (in SBr III 1, 8 7) thus —

Ṛta doubtless is the father of the couples of animals

Ṛta is credited as the creator of cattle as well as of rupa's, and it is interesting to observe the two aspects of his activity reflected in the real hero of the Mahabharata, Sri Krishna, in his well-known salutation verse as a benefactor of cows and Brahmins

The prominent contending heroes were Ṛta and Indra, Kartavirjuna and Parasurama, and in the Bharata Samhita likewise Rama and Ravana, Bhishma and Parasurama, Drona and Drupada, whilst Krishna against Kamsa and Sisupala, Bhima against Jarasandhu, Bhishma, Drona and Karna against Arjuna, Salva against Yudhisthira, Bhima against Duryodhana appeared in the Epics. All of them represent a variety of characters of different ages. In the Ramayana Rama and Ravana were the chief heroes, but in its Uttarakanda Ravana was defeated by Kartavirjuna and Mandhata and was not killed at the instance of Pulasta, the progenitor of Ravana. Ravana was killed only when he expressed the wish to Narada to fight with Narayana. Rama was born and satisfied Ravana's ambition by killing him. Mandhata and Ravana were contemporaries and, after many generations, Rama descended from Mandhata. The fight between Rama and Ravana was due to the abduction of Sita. Likewise all the contents in the Mahabharata belong

to different generations. They were more or less for the possession of property. The fight between Parasurama and Bhishma was for the alleged injustice in the Svayambara marriage of Amba, the princess of Benares. In the Mahabharata these were the descriptions of the causes of the birth of Draupadi and Sikhandi to kill two great warriors Drona and Bhishma, who defeated Drupada and Parasurama. This proves that the Mahabharata and Uttarakanda Ramayana did not belong to one particular time, but the accounts of generations were strung together to prove the great question of rebirth and punishment. What personal valour and energy failed to accomplish was fulfilled by sacrifices and religious fervour.

The good works men or women once begin, by giving every moment to God, are not lost but will be taken up by others. They grow and expand in the eternity of time. The aim of the great Indian Epic may be expressed in the lines of Wordsworth —

“ Blessings be with them and eternal praise,
Who give us nobler loves and nobler cares
The poets who on earth have made us heirs
Of truth and pure delight by heavenly lays
Oh might my name be numbered among theirs,
Then gladly would I end my mortal days ”

The Uttarakanda Ramayana begins with the installation ceremony of Rama after his great victory over Ravana. It was then that the celebrated sages from all parts of India went to congratulate the great hero on the victory he had achieved. The celebrated seven seers Attri, Bharadwaja, Visvamitra, Gautama, Jamadagni, Kasyapa and Vasistha hailed from the north, Agastya, Bimukha, Namuchi, Pramuchi, Sumukha and Svastyatreya from the south, Gargya, Galava, Kausika, Kanva, Yabacrita and son of Medhatithi from the east, Dhaumya, Kabarshi, Kouseya and Nrigangu from the west. They praised king Rama not so much for his victory over Ravana but for defeating his son Indrajit, who defeated the king of gods Indra. In this connection one very important fact is mentioned in the Uttarakanda (30th Canto) when Ravana took to task his preceptor Usana for worshipping Devas, including Indra, who were his enemies. The Uttarakanda laid stress on the event of the celebrated Madhu's marriage with Kumbhinashi, the sister of Ravana on his mother's side. So annoyed was he that he went to kill him, but a dramatic friendship was effected by Kumbhinashi. They were united by the force of this marriage, which came to be ratified by their joining in a fight against their enemies the Devas.

Nor can it be overlooked that the great Vedic sage Gautama cursed Indra for his forcible aggression on the body of the beautiful Ahalya.

Indra was defeated and taken prisoner for this curse and was called upon to share half of the similar sin which would thenceforward be perpetrated by others. Ahalya pleaded that she had been outraged by sheer force, for which she could not be held responsible. She was told that her sins would be expiated when she saw Rama in the wood, and if he would accept her hospitality. This marks the important age when ideas of chastity were considered to be affected by the touch of the person more than by thoughts in the mind, as it had been before. It was also mentioned that Dityas or demons were more powerful and prosperous than Devas. This was borne out in the Mahabharata too in connection with Agastya's prayer for gifts from the kings.

The Uttarakanda may be said to be a discourse between Rama and Agastya at the installation ceremony and not at any horse sacrifice he performed, whereas the Mahabharata and the Puranas were discussed between Sauti and Shunaka. Another important fact seems to be that Agastya described Narayana, appearing on the back of the famous bird Garuda and causing great havoc in the battle, and his censure by Malyavan for transgressing the old established war rules of the Kshatriyas which prohibited the killing of fleeing soldiers, which proved that he was not a Kshatriya (8th Canto). Agastya told Rama that the Demons he killed, like Ravana, were inferior in strength and energy to those killed by Narayana. Agastya describes Kapila as Nara (in 28th Canto, 63 verse).

The important clue seems to have been disclosed in canto 64 when Narada enlightened Ravana that Narayana worshippers lived in the White Island or the snowy range of the Himalaya, the abode of gods, and those who were killed by Narayana went to Heaven. Ravana pondered a little and decided to fight with Narayana. What is described in the Poulama Parva in the Mahabharata seems to have been explained in the Uttarakanda in the version of Durbasha. It was said Bhrgu cursed the god, for his act in killing his wife for giving shelter to the Dityas after their flight from the battle-field. The curse was the real genesis of the Ramayana, which is in the Uttarakanda and nowhere else. Besides this, there was good ground to think that the Uttarakanda actually formed part of the Bharata Samhita. The vague version of the Poulama Parva was the work of time, due to misrepresentation or the unfaithful memory of the reciters. The Uttarakanda can never be the sequel to the Ramayana.

The most important connection between the two great Indian Epics is seen in the Narayana cult. The great hero Rama * was released by Binata's son Garuda from the grasp of the serpents, who were

*69 Canto 20 verse

described as the children of Kadru. The Astika Parva of the Mahabharata gave the account of these serpents and the reputed powerful Garuda. Furthermore, the famous sloka (the first verse) the author of the Ramayana uttered, refers unmistakably to Yadu, the son of Yayati, in the account of the Uttarakanda*

"No fame be thine for endless time,
Because, base outcast, of thy crime,
Whose cruel hand was fain to slay
One of this gentle pair at play"

It is said that through evil Yadu's promiscuous gallantry in the forest Krouncha many Demons were born. Yayati and Yadu belong to the Mahabharata and the Bharata Samhita and not to the Ramayana. The author of the Ramayana, in spite of all his efforts to make the Ramayana an independent book about the Solar kings of Ayodhya, failed to obliterate the close link and connection and common origin of the two great Epics in the Bharata Samhita. In the Ramayana the subject-matter of Bharata Samhita, viz, Britta's fight, was also described. The genealogy of the Ikshaku in the Ramayana contains the names of Nahusa and Yayati. All these establish beyond doubt that the Bharata Samhita is the connecting link and the source of the two great Epics. The Bharata Samhita is found in the Uttarakanda Ramayana and the Mahabharata and Puranas. Kasyapa's children by his wives Diti and Aditi, Kadru and Binata, were the light and shade or the contending heroes of the two Epics. The Devas and Daityas were the sons of Diti and Aditi and the Danabas were born by another wife Dana. Kasyapa is the great progenitor of the contending parties and conflicting interests of the earth below and heaven above.

Kasyapa, Gautama, Vasistha and Agastya were the Vedic sages and were the founders of Vedic sacrifices. Their names were respected and handed down to posterity with the performance of religious rites they established in the daily and periodical worship of the Hindus in Aryavarta or India. Eventually their names were perpetuated in the early system of Gotras. The Vedas testify to it, for certain older hymns were distinguished with the single name of the composer whereas those by pupils and descendants of the great progenitor are mentioned in the plural †

The Epics were connected with Vedic legends and sages and were written in the style of discourses between the contemporary men,

*Ramayana VI, 10 Canto, 38 verse

†Prof Pargiter's "Ancient Indian Historical Tradition" p 186, 318 of

between elders and their descendants or pupils, instead of being written as a history on modern lines. These were then called Gathas and Gita. The Gathas were perhaps in prose and Gita in verse. Consequently they cannot be the composition of one author. The man who made the arrangement was called a Vyasa or editor. But when they came to be adapted in verse to help the reciters to remember them easily, they were done in the monasteries of teachers and of priests in such a way as to help them in the performance of the sacrifices. The true implication of the dispute in the Astika Parva between the sons of Kasyapa over the question of the true colour of the hair in the horse's tail which came out in the churning of the ocean, was the fight over the performance of sacrifices under white or black Yajurveda. The horse is clearly referred to as fire or sacrifice in the Prushya Parva in the discourse between Utamka and his preceptor.

The complaint of a dog being beaten without any cause was common in the Paushya Parva and Uttarakanda, but the striking difference lay in the curses. In Prushya Parva it is pronounced by the mother of the dog to a king, whereas in the Uttarakanda Rama pronounced his decision in terms of the complainant dog, who was undergoing the punishment of transgression of the past life of a Kulapati and worshipper of idols at Benares under the Pasupat cult. The implication is clear, the system of religious propagation under the system of Kulapati Saunaka was not productive of good results but had been increasing vanity, pedantry and idolatry, which do not send a man to heaven but to hell. At the fiat of the sentence declared by Rama, the whole assembly was surprised, but when it was explained by the complainant dog by reciting the story of its former life, the people realised that any sudden rise in the station of life was productive of bad results in the end. In ancient India there was one word which became all important, and it was sacrifice. At the high altar of sacrifice rose Brahma, the real creator of the earthly, moral and spiritual world.

These are clear Vedic references as to the origin of the Epics and their inter-relation, and give a clue to the claims of distinct authorship of the two Epics. It was solely composed for sacrifices and the maintenance of priestly power. Vasisthas were the priests of the Bharatas and the Bharata Samhita was enlarged and improved by them, and Vyasa, the son of Parasara, came to be regarded as the distinguished author. The Epic Ramayana belonged to the family of Bhrigus and relates the deeds of their disciples Ravana and Rama. How Rama was a follower of Bhrigu requires elucidation. Visvamitra effected the marriage of Rama and officiated on behalf of Janaka, and Vasistha on behalf of Rama as a family priest. The Uttarakanda described the ill-feeling between

Nimi and Vasistha on the question of priesthood. Vasistha was the priest of the Solar line of Ikshakus. Nimi did not wait for Vasistha's return, as requested by him, for he was prevented from undertaking the sacrifice by previous engagement by the Devas. Nimi engaged Gautama to perform his sacrifice and Vasistha was not only annoyed when he came to know of it but cursed Nimi. Nimi was equally competent to curse Vasistha. Vasistha's rebirth in Mitra Baruna through sacrifice took place in the same way as it did with Nimi through the good offices of Bhrigu. The Vedic hymn and the Satapatha-Brahmana testify that in a fight between the Devas and Daityas the slain were brought back to life —

"There is the arista (—saman) (22) ' ' The Gods and the Asuras were contending, whom they slew of the gods, that one did not come to life again, whom (they slew) of the Asurās, that one came to life again. The gods performed austerities: they saw that arista (—saman), thereupon whom they slew of the gods, that one came to life again, whom of the Asuras, that one did not come to life again. (A similar legend of the reviving of the slain gods is found in Sat Br II 6 1 1, atha yan ovasam tasmin samgrame ghnams tan pitryajñena samairayanta) (Because they now thought), "we have through this (saman) come out unharmed" (narisama) therefore it is called arista ('free from harm'). The arista is applied at the end (of the arbhava; parasma, laud) in order to be free from harm (23) " "

The Uttarakanda Ramayana and the Mahabharata follow this Vedic idea of religious resurrection. The name of Nimi was identified with Naimisharanya, the most sacred place of Ancient India, being the centre of the practical Vedic teaching institution of Bhrigu. Bhrigu, the greatest ancient political seer, first conceived the idea of becoming the leader of religious thought in India on the line of decentralisation. Vyasa, the most conspicuous in the line of Vasistha, made Badrinarayan and Benares the centres of Vasistha's institution, which became two of the greatest shrines of India. The two great Indian Epics—the Ramayana and the Mahabharata of the two distinct centres—naturally became a heterogeneous mass of contradiction and mysticism at the hands of different editors of different times who adorned the two different centres of the Pasupati and Narayana cults of the past.

A peculiarity ascribed to the Vasisthas appears in Karma-pradipa, a supplement of the Gobhila Sūtras, that they exclude meat from their sacrifices. It proves conclusively that the Vasisthas are the authors of the Mahabharata, which begins with the story of Uparichara, who was made to conform to the rules of sacrifices without meat. Besides, the 1st Adhyaya of the Vasistha Smṛiti declares Narayana is a deity of Brahmins and Rudra that of the Sudras.

Professor Max Muller says that to illustrate the sacrificial system and the duties of three or four classes of priests engaged at the great

*Paneyamsa Brahmana p. 254 para 22 and 23.

sacrifices an arrangement was come to and finally agreed upon long before the different Brahmanas were composed. He further states that the division of priests and the general order of sacrifices must have been settled before the composition of the Samhitas of Sama and Yajur Vedas, for both follow the established order of sacrifices. These Samhitas are no more than mere collections of verses meant for the second and third classes of priests—Chhandogya and Adhvaryus. It seems that the Bharata Samhita was originally a manual book of great sacrifices with the important decision of worshipping the accredited god of the age, Narayana.

The family of Angirasa—Utathya, Brihaspati and Sambhartha—were famous priests of Devas and kings of India. Their descendant Bharadvaja played a very important part in both the Epics.

The Asuras, enemies of Brihaspati, gave currency to the fictitious story of incestuous connection of Brihaspati with his elder brother's wife Mamotha. This was set at rest by the explanation given by the exalted Markendeya of the family of the priest of Asuras in Bana Parva.

The great Angira and Brihaspati were ancient law-givers and in Manu one finds the position of women and their expiation mantra for incestuous sin in Chapter IX.

"The purificatory rites of women are (i.e. must be performed) without the Vedic Mantras: this is the decision of the law code. And for this disqualification of Mantralessness, women are like unto inorganic things. This is the conclusion (18). "The proneness of women to infidelity has been largely sung in the Vedas and Nigamas. Now hear what has been said in the Vedas regarding the expiation of their incestuous sin (19). Inasmuch as my mother, faithless to her lord, used to stroll about in quest of other men's embraces, may my father purify her orum defiled by her incests with others. This (Mantra of the Veda) serves as an illustration (of what has been said in the preceding couplet) (20)."

The law-givers lowered the position of women and accused them of infidelity, which must have created a large number of enemies and the crimes they tried to put down were thrown on their own shoulders, i.e., that they were guilty of them. Marriage reform took place in the course of time. It is a palpable mistake to imagine that everything is ideal from its very creation. The incredible things are the pure mechanism of the brute creation, or passive obedience to, or the infallibility of, priests or Popes. Everyone feels that his opinion is right and correct, but if he is open to conviction it is alright. But if, instead of changing his wrong views, he is bent upon persisting, then dispute arises. It was thus that the creator Brahma and the law-giver

Brihaspati were unjustly accused of the crimes they were trying to punish and repress by law

The kings, their priests and philosophers were at first working together to make the religion of the Hindus popular by sacrifices, symbols, mythology and allegorical interpretations. Necessarily, like the genesis of the Old Testament, the oldest Hindu records contain accounts of the discourses of gods, sages and kings of yore. Learned men have found that language, writing and religion have come one after the other, or simultaneously. The separate spirit by the system of metaphors is represented in Garuda. The people of Ancient Egypt,* with whom the Indians were in close touch, were familiar with it. In their hieroglyphics the figures of Garuda, etc., are found. They knew and believed in the symbols of divine life and transmigration. It is said that the soul flies away, caught in the claws of the divine bird Garuda.

In the birth of societies the chiefs of the states contribute as much by special traits in their character as their priests, and these afterwards come to be regarded as attributes of virtue. Society is the union of men and its figure is made up of such examples as will live for ages. The life of societies and states is like that of a man. A man has the right to kill in self-defence; so a nation has full justification to wage war for its very existence when that is threatened. This is the law of Ancient India and was the cause of the fights in Vedic days. The king then rewarded the real merit of his priests and subjects. It was for this that the Vedic hymns were not confined to the exclusive authorship of the Brahmans, and became an appellation for a just king. Indra was the name of such a king.

Under Monarchical Government, where no attempts have been made to disgrace or humble the nature of a man, there can be no slavery. This was the ideal of the Ancient Hindu Government in India under a king. Taxation was light in comparison with Constitutional Government, where everyone wants to be on the same level of life and enjoyment. The manners of a king or a prince conduce as much to the question of liberty or law. The Vedic kings and princes affect no distinction, mix with their people, dress like them, worship with them in public sacrifices, make their priests enlighten them on the points of law, usage and religion and take part with them in the pastimes of hunting, etc. The people then forgot the king's weaknesses and loved him dearly as their own kith and kin. But when the caste system divided the orders of the people, then the people began to mind class

* (Horapollis 1 7.)

interests. It is not fortune which rules the world. Neither the blows of the forks of a sage, nor the lash of a king can make a man change his natural inclination. When men began to follow distinct lines of action and profession they could no longer be deceived as to their own class-interests, as they were being developed with distinct inclinations. No sooner had they realised their position, than they found themselves duped. The universe is ruled by the laws of Nature and change is made by volcanoes, floods, storms, etc., so there are more than general causes, material, moral and spiritual, which influence revolution in society. In such a revolution the ancient Hindu monarchs were made to live under the fundamental laws of their state, so that they might not be despots, like Venā. Then they had nothing to regulate the hearts of the people or their own. The world became more and more artificial and stereotyped.

In time the system of Monarchical Government was corrupted, and the marks of the highest slavery were reflected in the high dignitaries of the king and priests and made them the vile instruments of arbitrary powers, covering their sins and shame with all sorts of dignity of offices, spells of sacrifices, riches and entertaining the public to all sorts of amusements and magic. Besides, the true strength of a king does not lie so much in his valour, skill at arms and possession of a vast army or his ability to conquer the powerful neighbouring kings, as in the art of preserving and increasing wealth in the kingdom and in the wisdom of consolidating the unity of his subjects as one national unit. A Democratic Government is ruined by the luxurious habits of the general public, while monarchy meets its doom by poverty.

It was for this the Bharata Samhita mentions that the Vedic kings Srutoroba, etc. showed their incomes when the sage Agastya approached them for gifts. The great Agastya at last took them to an Asura King, whom he not only made give what Agastya wanted, but disgorge the major portion of the wealth he had amassed by an orthodox mode of life and policy. The word Dasyu or robbery seems to have been the origin of the word Dasa. The Dasyu was made a Dasa by Agastya. What Agastya did his contemporary, the Vedic Bharata king Nahusa, also accomplished. Dr Winternitz says —

“The legend of Nahusa, the father of Yacati, which is related in the Mahabharata several times, is also a kind of Tital legend which ends with a fall from heaven: Nahusa, a grandson of the Pururavas of Vedic fame, was a mighty king, who annihilated the robber bands (dasyu-samghatan). But he levied taxes on the rishis, too, and commanded them to carry him on their backs, like beasts of burden. He even overpowered the gods, and ruled the Heavens for a long time in Indra's stead. He desired Indra's wife Sachi as his wife, and grew so overbearing that he yoked the divine rishis to his chariot, treading on Agastya's head. Now this was a bit too much for this

gods. Sūta, and he carried Nihusa with the consequence that he fell from heaven and was obliged to live on the earth as a snake for ten thousand years **

This proves that Dasyus were Asuras first and slaves or dasas afterwards. Dasyus or Asuras saw clearly that their unexpected fortunes by robbery did not last nor were they works of merit. They saw the power of men like Nihusa and Kubalassa and were fully convinced of the advantages derived from virtue and sacrifice. They practised these from interested motives and the 'Pancavimsa Brahmana' testifies to it —

With the Asuras (once) was the whole sacrifice. The Gods saw the yajñayajuiya by means of (the words) 'by sacrifice on sacrifice in honour of Agni' they took from them the agnihotra (by the words) 'and by hymn on hymn in honour of the skilful', the full—and new moon sacrifice (by the words) 'continually we (will extol) the immortal Jatavedas', the seasonal sacrifice and by (the words) 'as a dear friend I will extol', the sacrifice of Soma' (5) "At that time the metres (the verse quarters of it) were, 'By sacrifice in honour of Agni, by hymn in honour of the skilful, we (will extol) the immortal Jatavedas, as a dear friend I will extol. Now, the gods by means of the verses repeating each time the beginning (the first word of each verse quarter), took the sacrifice away from the Asuras" (1) †

The priests claimed a monopoly of all knowledge, divine and earthly. They appropriated it to play upon the imagination of the contending parties by a sort of compromise. The Naga worshippers found their adorning creature and the intelligent found the meditative god resting in peace over it. This is the true emblem of submission and peace. A true religion makes what the bloodshed of war cannot accomplish. A plain record of facts and deeds would have given just cause for continuing the fight and ill feeling between the different parties. Fiction and mythology in the history of nations were introduced for the purpose of satisfying the educated and the illiterate mass, in order to convey to each what each wanted, according to their respective angles of vision and their respective culture, knowledge and belief. Vyasa and Valmiki fulfilled the task with which they were entrusted and their names have been handed down to posterity with great reverence. They developed a marvellous craving for fiction and mythology in the peaceful growth of Indian civilisation, which was copied by other nations with whom they came in contact.

Indian astrology, astronomy and medicine were studied, and demonstrated the skill and power of the priests and sages. The Hindus believe in the influence of planets over the fortunes of men, and the seven days of the week were named after them. The names of the discoverers of these planets are, perhaps, recorded in their names, but one cannot overlook one important fact, that the sun and the moon are

* Dr Winternitz's "A History of Indian Literature," Vol. I, p. 381.

† "Pancavimsa Brahmana," p. 170, verses 5 and 6

included in them, and the number of the planets are the same with the digits of nine. The nine astronomical treatises were called Siddhantas. In the Yajur Veda and Brahmanis occur expressions—*Nakshatra-darsa* and *Ganaka*, the observers of the heavens as astrologers and astronomers. The invention of algebra and the first astronomical ideas owed their origin to Ancient India.

Vyasa and Valmiki were not concerned with these, though their ancestors were celebrated masters. Vasistha and Parasara, from whom Vyasa was descended, were the authors of two astronomical treatises. Bhrigu's name as the greatest astrologer still lives in his monumental astrological work called *Bhrigu Samhita*. About the sage Saunaka, with whom the current *Manu Smriti* is so much concerned, even the learned Max Muller expressed his confusion in the clearest manner possible —

"The story of Saunahotra the son of Sunahotra and grandson of Bharadwaja, being born again as Gritsamada Saunaka, may have some historical foundation, and the only way in which it can be interpreted is, that the second Mandala, being originally seen by Gritsamada of the family of Bhrigu, was afterwards preserved by Saunahotra a descendant of Bharadwaja, of the race of Angiras, who entered the family of Bhrigu took the name of Saunaka and added one hymn, the twelfth, in praise of Indra. This is partly confirmed by *katjavana-anukramani* and by the *Rishyanukramani* of Saunaka. It would by no means follow that Saunaka was the author of the hymns of the second Mandala. The hymns of that Mandala belong to Gritsamada of the Bhrigu race. But Saunaka may have adopted that Mandala and by adding one hymn, may have been said to have made it his own. Again, it does not concern us at present whether Saunaka, the author of the *kalpasutra*, was the same as Saunaka the chief of the sages in the Naimishya Forest, to whom during the great twelve years sacrifice Ugrasrava related the Mahabharata, and who became the teacher of Satanika, the son of Janamejaya. If this identity could be established, a most important link would be gained connecting Saunaka and his literary activity with another period of Indian literature. This point must be reserved for further consideration."

The learned Pargiter says —

"The fable about Vasistha and Agastya is very ancient, because it was current when hymn vii 33 was composed in or soon after the reign of Sudas. The *Jatukarnyas* were a Vasistha Gotra. This name is a patronymic, and so there were several of the name. *Jatukarna* or a *Jatukarnya* is said to have taught Vyasa the Veda (Va 1 14 Hv 42 2364 Vedic literature says Vyasa was a disciple of Visvaksema, Vedic Index, ii, 339. The two may be the same) and the Purana, and is described as Vyasa's predecessor as regards the Veda. There were other *Jatukarnyas* later!"†

Agastya left no family, no Gotra, or there can be no two Agastyas in the two Epics. He is one of the ancient sages of whom the gods sought assistance, not to perform their Vedic sacrifices but to perform wonderful acts that neither they themselves nor anybody else could do.

*Professor Max Muller's "Ancient Sanskrit Literature," pp 232-233

†Professor Pargiter's "Ancient Indian Historical Tradition," pp 216 and 217

He became famous by swallowing the ocean dry at the request of the Devas, so that the Asuras could not hide there in any form. He digested Batapi, the brother of the Asura king Ilval, and the practice of killing kings and robbing their wealth was discontinued. This can be inferred from the trend of the story in the Mahabharata and the distribution of wealth to the kings who accompanied the great sage Agastya. In the Ramayana, Rama went to the hermitage of Agastya and killed Ravana with the celestial weapon with which he was invested. No one else but Agastya knew this deadly weapon of Narayana.

"The arrow Saint Agastya gave
And blessed the chieftain's life to save
That dart the Eternal Father made
The Monarch of the Gods to aid,
By Brahma's self on him bestowed
When forth to fight Lord Indra rode

He laid it on the twisted cord,
He turned the point at Lanka's Lord
And swift the limb dividing dart
Pierced the huge chest and cleft the heart
And dead he fell upon the plain
Like Vritra by the Thunderer slain,
The Rakshas host when Ravana fell
Sent forth a wild terrific yell,
Then turned and fled, all hope resigned,
Through Lanka's gates, nor lothed behind
His voice each joyous Vanar raised,
And Rama, conquering Ravana, praised."

The Asuras practised all sorts of illusion and it was sage Agastya who first found a means to set them at naught by his psychic power, knowledge of science and religious austerities. It might be that he was instrumental in the origin of the Atharva Veda. Professor A. A. Macdonell says —

"The adherents of the three sacrificial Vedas would thus naturally recognise a work which was a repository of witchcraft. Thus the Satyapatha Brahmana, though characterising Yatu or sorcery as devilish—doubtless because it may be dangerous to those who practice it—places yatuvidah or sorcerers by the side of bahuvichas or men skilled in Rig Vedic verses. Just as the Rig Veda contains very few hymns directly connected with the practice of sorcery, so the Atharva originally included only matters incidental and subsidiary to the sacrificial ritual. In the Mahabharata we find the importance and the canonical character of the Atharva fully recognised. The four Vedas are often mentioned, the gods Brahma and Vishnu being in several passages described as having created them. The Atharva is here often also referred to alone, and spoken of with approbation. Its practices

* "The Ramayana of Valmiki" by Professor Ralph T. H. Griffith, page 491, Canto CX.

are well known and seldom criticised adversely, magic and sorcery being as a rule, regarded as good'.

The Vedic implication of Brihaspati by Professor A. A. Macdonell is very interesting. He says —

"A deity of an abstract chara for occurring in the oldest as well as the latest parts of the Rig Veda is Brihaspati, 'Lord of Prayer'.

Roth and other distinguished Vedic scholars regard him as a direct personification of devotion. In the opinion of the present writer, however, he is only an indirect deification of the sacrificial activity of Agni, a god with whom he has undoubtedly much in common. Thus the most prominent feature of his character is his priesthood. Like Agni, he has been drawn into and has obtained a firm footing in the Indra myth. Thus he is often described as driving out the cows after vanquishing the demon Vala. As the divine Brahmin priest, Brihaspati seems to have been the prototype of the god Brahma, chief of the later Hindu trinity. But the name Brihaspati itself survived in post-Vedic mythology as the designation of a sage, the teacher of the gods, and regent of the planet Jupiter.

Another abstraction, and one of a very peculiar kind, is the goddess Aditi. Though not the subject of any separate hymn, she is often incidentally celebrated. She has two, and only two, prominent characteristics. She is, in the first place, the mother of the small group of gods called Adityas, of whom Varuna is the chief. Secondly, she has, like her son Varuna, the power of releasing from the bonds of physical suffering and moral guilt. With the latter trait her name, which means 'Unbinding,' 'Freedom,' is clearly connected. The unpersonified sense seems to survive in a few passages of the Rig Veda. Thus a poet prays for the 'secure and unlimited gift of Aditi'. The origin of the abstraction is probably to be explained as follows. The expression 'sons of Aditi', which is several times applied to the Adityas, when first used in all likelihood meant 'sons of liberation', to emphasise a salient trait of their character, according to a turn of language common in the Rig Veda. The feminine word 'liberation' (Aditi) used in this connection would then have become personified by a process which has more than one parallel in Sanskrit. Thus Aditi, a goddess of Indian origin, is historically younger than some at least of her sons, who can be traced back to a pre-Indian age.

"Goddesses as a whole, occupy a very subordinate position in Vedic belief. They play hardly any part as rulers of the world. The only one of any consequence is Ushas. The next in importance Sarasvati, ranks only with the least prominent

* "A History of Sanskrit Literature" by Professor A. A. Macdonell, pp 191-2 and 193-4

of the male gods One of the few, besides Prithivi, to whom an entire hymn is addressed, is Ratri, Night ""

The mythological phase presented by the Rig Veda is comparatively primitive, when the fire god is called a slayer of the Demon Vritra, associated with Indra In the Rig Veda v.3.1, the following invocation appears —

'Thou at thy birth O' Agni, art Varuna, when kindled thou becomest Mitra, in thee, O' son of Might, all gods are centred, thou art Indra to the worshipper'†

In the Brahmanas it is found that the sacrifice is said to have not only controlled the Vedic gods but also the processes of Nature In the myths of the Yajur Veda, the Demons appeared as a group of evil beings of Asuras with the Apsaras, a class of celestial nymphs, with all the charms of female beauty to make sages give up asceticism and accept priesthood It is found that the formulas of Yajur Vedas were not mere forms of prayer to gods, but consisted of statements of results of employing particular rites and Mantras. The Atharva Veda betrays no such regard for sacrificial punctuality and punctiliousness like the Rig Veda, but contains incantations and formulas, sorcery to overthrow enemies, to drive away diseases with the discovery of sciences, of medicines and astrology, etc, so very necessary for suffering humanity. Naturally the older and conservative sections had a certain amount of prejudice against it

The learned Pargiter has found out one significant fact As a judge, what one cannot lose sight of is that the

"historical tradition in the Vedic literature has one great merit over that in the Epics and Puranas, namely that the literature has been carefully preserved and what it contains now is what it contained when it was composed, so that its statements are statements of that time"‡

Neither Vyasa nor Valmiki was of the Vedic age, nor were their names mentioned in any of the Vedas They could not have been, as they belonged to later ages But his views and findings cannot appeal to reason He says if Vyasa divided the Vedas there must have been some mention of it somewhere as an arranger, and gives the excuse that this was not done with the purpose of not disturbing the universal faith of the Hindus that the Vedas were not made by anyone but by God himself This would have been alright if the hymns did not contain the names of the authors and to whom they were addressed. One must give him due credit for correcting his erroneous views when he says —

"What Vyasa did seems to have been this The statement that he arranged and divided the four pada Veda into four suggests, (1) that, though re, saman, and

*Professor A. A. Macdonell's "Sanskrit Literature," pp 102, 103

†Professor A. A. Macdonell's "Sanskrit Literature," p 70

‡Professor Pargiter's "Ancient Indian Historical Tradition," Cf P 9

probably Yajus and Atharvan were distinguished before, as shown above, yet they had not been treated distinctly, all co-existed as four parts in one general Veda, and he definitely separated them and constituted them respectively as four distinct Vedas, or (2) that at any rate he expressly and formally fixed the four-fold division and completed the canon of each Veda in definite shape which became final subject to small modifications afterwards. He had four disciples and entrusted to each of them one Veda viz., the Rig Veda to Jaimini, the Yajur Veda to Vaisampayana, the Sama Veda to Jaimini and the Atharva Veda to Sumanta. The priestly literature has suppressed all this just as it has ignored Vyasa, for something of this sort must have taken place on any theory of the compilation of the four Vedas.*

Vyasa preserved his name in his disciples, whom in those days preceptors left as living monuments. The preceptor destroyed his own writing for the fame of his disciple, Saurashtra did so and Asvalayana came into prominence†. Besides, Vyasa found his work, the Mahabharata, was regarded as the fifth Veda and attracted greater attention from the public, and for that reason he did not like to depreciate its value by making hymns in the Veda or giving out his name as a mere arranger. When Vyasa and Valmiki were born it was an age of philosophy and not of hymns. It was for this the guardians Adhipati of the four Vedas—Rig, Yajur, Sama and Atharva—were Brihaspati, Sukra, Mangal and Budha, respectively.

Vyasa Badarayana of Brahma Sutras dealt with the doctrines of Vedanta philosophy and was the best and oldest commentator of Yoga philosophy. From the philosophy of Samkhya all the six philosophies of Ancient India grew. Mimamsa is merely the development of the theory of dispute, the vehicle of the senses in the eternity of words and sound, whereas Naya of Goutama is only the complement of the Vaiseshiki system of philosophy. The Mahabharata illustrates the Yoga, Samkhya and Vedanta philosophies by examples. A calf finds its mother out of a thousand cows, so previous deeds follow their doers. Fate without action accomplishes no good result, like a seed thrown outside the tilled land seldom bears fruit, and so forth. Atharva Veda gives the origin of the world on the eternal principle, and Yajur Veda is full of cosmogonic legends proving that, through sacrifices and fire, the world was produced. All these theories and stories are in the Mahabharata and the Uttarakanda Ramayana. But the Ramayana up to the sixth book is a regular artificial Epic with the practices of ceremonies under Atharva Veda.

*Professor F. L. Pargiter's "Ancient Indian Historical Tradition," p. 320

†Professor Max Muller's "Ancient Sanskrit Literature," p. 233

* The Saint, well read in Holy Lore
 Pondered awhile his answer o'er
 And thus again addressed the king,
 His wondering thoughts regathering,
 'Another rite will I begin
 Which shall the sons thou cravest win,
 Where all things shall be duly sped
 And first Atharva texts be read '
 Then by Vibhandak's gentle son
 Was that high sacrifice begun,
 The king's advantage seeking still
 And zealous to perform his will,
 Now all the Gods had gathered there,
 Each one for his allotted share,
 Brahma, the ruler of the sky,
 Sthanu, Narayan, Lord most high,
 And holy Indra men might view
 With Maruts † for his retinue,
 The Heavenly Chorister, and Saint,
 And spirit pure from earthly taint,
 With one accord had sought the place
 The high-souled monarch's rite to grace
 ‡ When thus the suppliant Gods had prayed,
 His wise reply Narayan made,
 'What task demands my presence there,
 And whence this dread, ye Gods declare '

Vasistha was a great priest of the Ikshaku family and no ground was given for bringing Rishyasringa, son of Vibhandaka Kasyapa, from the Court of the Anga kingdom. There is a mention of Vasistha's performing sacrifices for this Deva in the Uttarakhanda, but he was present at the sacrifice under the leadership of Rishyasringa, who in fact was Dasaratha's son-in-law. Lomapada, king of Anga, adopted the daughter of Dasaratha, and Rishyasringa was led astray by the said king, through the services of beautiful girls, to marry the said adopted daughter Shanta as a fee for a sacrifice performed for making his country and people prosperous. The family of Kasyapa it seems, lived in lower Bengal and finally went to Anga. The Mahabharata identifies one family with the Nagas or serpents, and Bengal might be called their home. On its border lies the country called Chota Nagpur, whose origin in tradition connects it with the Epic.

"Raja Janmejaya had declared war against the entire race of the serpents, one of whom, Pundarika Nag by name, managed to escape, and having assumed a human

*Prof. Ralph T. H. Griffith's "The Ramayan of Valmiki," Page 25, Canto XIV

†The Maruts are the winds, deified in the religion of the Veda like other mighty powers and phenomena of nature

‡Prof. Ralph T. H. Griffith's "The Ramayan of Valmiki," Page 26, Canto XIV.

form, travelled to Benares, and there succeeded in winning the hand of Parvati, the beautiful daughter of a Brahman. Notwithstanding his otherwise human appearance, Pandarika could not get rid of the serpent's forked tongue, which roused the curiosity of his spouse. In order to divert her mind from this subject he took her on a pilgrimage to the holy temple of Jagannath at Puri. On their way back they passed through Jharkand, as Chota Nagpur then in the occupation of the Mundas, was called. Near the hill of Sutiambi, Parvati was seized with the pangs of child birth and importuned her husband to divulge the secret of his forked tongue. He disclosed to her his real identity, and disappeared in his proper form into a pool of water close by. Immediately after the birth of her child Parvati in great remorse at the consequences of her curiosity, committed sati. Later a Brahman passed that way, carrying an idol of Surya Devata, the Sun God, and stopped to drink at the pool, placing the idol on the brink. When about to resume his journey he found that the idol could not be moved. On looking about him, he saw to his astonishment a huge cobra protecting with its expanded hood a little naked child. The serpent revealed himself to the Brahman as Pandarika Nag, and narrated his strange history. He prophesied that the child was destined to rule the country and directed that he was to be named Phani Mukuta Rai and that the country should be called Nagpur. The child was carried to neighbouring Manki, who adopted him, and Phani Mukuta Rai in due course fulfilled his destiny."

The Raj family and Feudatory Chiefs of Chota Nagpur, Orissa and Central Provinces intermarry with Kshatriya Rajput families. The Mundas are a Vedic race as their belief, that the soul of the dead goes to the plants or water, is recorded in the Rig Veda. The poor Mundas who embrace Christianity refuse to sit with other Christians to take their meals nor take to weaving easily. The old instinct still lingers. It seems therefore that the Atharva Veda, which owes its origin to the Kasyapa family, was first introduced in the kingdom of Ajodhya. Dasaratha's daughter Shanta, who was born out of the sacrifice of Vasistha, was given in adoption to his friend Lomapada on condition that he would send Rishyasringa to perform the sacrifice for getting sons. It was for this the sage with his wife came to perform the sacrifice. It is evident that the sage Rishyasringa of the Kasyapa family practised the ceremony under Atharva Veda and it owed its origin to the Angirasa family, who were designated Atharva Angirasa.

The word Angirasa seems to be the composition of two words—Anga and Rishi—and Angirasa is a variant of Angarshi. The Angirasa family lived in the kingdom of Marutta† Vaisali, the name of the kingdom of Marutta, owed its origin to the early times of Rig Veda. "The king Vaisala", says, Professor Pargiter, "is said to have founded Vaisala or Vaisali as his capital"‡ It is like Mithila, the capital of the King Mithi. The Vaisala dynasty descended from Manu's son

*From Tea Districts Labour Association's 'Hand Book of Castes and Tribes' (1924) Pages 9-10

†Professor Pargiter's "Ancient Indian Historical Tradition," Page 157

‡Professor Pargiter's "Ancient Indian Historical Tradition," Page 97

Nabhanedistha. The family was Vaisa and it seems to be more probable the name owes its origin to Vaisa, a Rig Vedic hymn maker—Vatsapri Bhalandana is the reputed author of Rig Veda IX 68—who is the founder of the Vaisala dynasty, mentioned in both the Epics.

Kasyapa did yeoman service to the Kshatriya race in saving the Kshatriya princes from the cruel hands of Parasurama*. It is said that the ancestor of Lomapada, Dibiratha, the grandson of Dadhivahana, was saved in the hermitage of Gautama on the Ganges. In the dynastic list of Mr. Pargiter, Promothu of the Vaisala dynasty and Lomapada and Dasarath were contemporary kings. It proves that the influence of the Atharva Veda extended to these kingdoms through the Kasyap family and Vasistha received the epithet Atharvanidhi II† Dr Winternitz explains the two expressions—Atharvan and Angiras—as two distinct magic formulas. The institute of Manu (XI 33) says clearly that the sacred texts of Atharva Veda are the weapons of the Brahmins to kill their enemies. Dr Winternitz said. —

"There exists a rather large class of magic songs, which are intended for the needs of the kings, partly exorcism formulas against enemies and partly benedictions. Every king was compelled, in India, from the earliest times, to have his Purohit or family priest, and this family priest had to be familiar with the magic rites which refer to the life of a king ('rajakramani,' 'kings' rites') and also with the songs and charms belonging to these rites. The Atharva Veda therefore is closely connected with the warrior caste" ‡

Chapter 49 of Shanti Parva is very important for it sets at rest the Western theory of Aryan immigration from the West. It will be seen that even at the fearful time of Kshatriya extermination by Parasurama, Kshatriya princes and princesses did not leave India but sought protection in Vaisya and Sudra families and in some cases were reared by bears, cows and tigers in the woods. They did not go out of India, nor did the Aryans come from any country other than India. The so-called Non-Aryans were no different from the Aryans as aborigines. The Vedic texts will testify to it.

"We are surrounded on all sides by Dasyu tribes. They do not perform sacrifices, they do not believe in anything, their rites are different, they are not men, O' destroyer of foes! kill them. Destroy the Dasa race" (X 228). "In X, 49 Indra proclaims that he has deprived the Dasyu race of the name of Arya (verse 3), that he has destroyed Navavastva and Brihadratha of the Dasa race (verse 6), that he cuts the Dasas in twain, 'It is for this fate that they have been born!' (Verse 7)§

* Santi Parva Chapter 4)

† Prof Pargiter's 'Ancient Indian Historical Tradition', Page 246

‡ Dr Winternitz "A History of Indian Literature" Page 120

§ "The Vedic Period" Book I, Chapter IV

It is very unfortunate that Western scholars like the learned Pargiter are not exempt from fanciful dreams, for he says that the Kasyapa, Angira and Atri might be non-Aryan as their names were not Sanskrit like Bhuru and Vasistha. In the case of Kasyapa he mentioned that the inference was further strengthened by the Ditya monarch Hiranya Kasipu's name. He should have seen that it is very common in Ancient India that the father's or the family name distinguished one from another of the same name. The learned Western scholar will admit that Kasyapa was the patriarch of Hindu genesis, and Aryan Bhargava and Vasisthas officiated as priests to Hiranya Kasipu*. He should have seen that Aryan priests would not officiate at the sacrifice of a non-Aryan demon, if he really was one. There is no mention of Aryan migration from the West in the sacred books of the Hindus. On the other hand, in the Mahabharata, of the goddesses of wealth Lakshmi presided in the abodes of the virtuous Asuras and Sambara was devoted to the Brahmins. In Vedic times the causes of the great fight were not like those of the Epics but for putting a stop to mischievous plans for doing injury to irrigation and agriculture and for the possession of cows.

Science has proved that the colour white is formed out of seven original colours, and the Hindus had been the dwellers of the seven river islands and came to be known by the name of Aryan when they formed themselves into a society. The god Siva, the centre of the Pasupat cult, is dressed in the fashion of an aborigine, from which the Narayana cult evolved. Aryan civilisation was evolved not from one place or region but from the several places of India. Professor Macdonell says —

"It is natural to suppose that the numerous Vedic tribes, under the altered conditions of life in rest plains coalesced into nations with new names. It is not unlikely that the Tritsus whose name disappears after the Rig Veda, also furnished one of the elements of the Kuru nation. A Brahmana passage contains an indication that the Turvacas may have been one of the several small tribes to make up a nation. Perhaps the Yadus generally associated with the Turvacas in the Rig Veda were also one of them. The name of the Panchala itself (derived from Pancha, five) seems to indicate that these people consisted of an aggregate of five elements."†

The Rig Vedic tribes were the Purus, Ucinaras, Srinjayas, Matryas, Matsyas, Chedis, etc., besides those already mentioned. The Gandharas, Mujavats, Maghadhas, Angas etc., were mentioned in the Atharva Veda.

* Professor Pargiter's "Ancient Historical Tradition," page 307

† Professor Macdonell's "Sanskrit Literature" Page 156-157

"The Dravids," says Mr. Macdonell, "are described in the Rig Veda as non-sacrificing, unbelieving and impious. They styled themselves Aryas or 'Kinsmen' as opposed to the aborigines, to whom they gave the name of Dasya or Dasa 'Slaves,' in later times also called Anarya or non-Aryans."

The Vedic battle of ten kings was fought on the banks of Parushni. The ten kings coalesced in their endeavours to cross the stream to deflect its course, but were repulsed with very heavy loss by the Tritsus.

The Bharatas appear to be specially connected with sacrificial rites in the Rig Veda, for Agni (as belonging to the Bharatas) receives the epithet Bharata, and the ritual goddess Bharata frequently associated with Sarasvati, derives her name from there. In a hymn to Agni (III 13) mention is made of two Bharatas named Devacrata and Devavata who kindled the sacred fire on the Drishadvati, the Apaya and the Sarisvati, the very region which is later celebrated as the holy land of Brahmanism under the names of Brahmanvata and Kurukshetra.¹

The basis of Vedic society was reflected in the different centres when the distinct divisions of one Rig Veda were developed and followed. The priestly Parishada or assembly of the different centres decided the scriptural point and Vyasa and Valmiki were commissioned simply to work out their view-points instead of their own individual opinion. They were not fictitious personages, for one finds them connected with the distinct branches of important sections of Aryan education. Vyasa was a philosopher and law-giver of no mean order, whereas Valmiki was one of the teachers of the Taittiriya Pratisakhya.² The Bharata Samhita was the first source of Epic structure and its growth was wholly connected with Vedic mythology and sacrifices, as the very name implies with the explanation given by the learned Western scholar of the word "Bharata."

The Uttarakanda Ramayana gives a clue to the Mahabharata and the Ramayana as belonging to the time of Agastya; Narada reciting to Sanat Kumar, in the fashion of the Bharata Samhita, a portion of the Mahabharata. It also mentions the meeting at Pratisthana of the Apsara Urbasi and Pururaba, on whom the development and growth of the Ailas depended, as described in the Bharata Samhita, the Vajayayat of Nimi; the marriage of Trinabindu's daughter with Pulastya, the progenitor of Ravan; the history of the family leading to the mischief at the sacrifice of Marutta, and putting up of an obstacle to the ambition of Vedavati, the daughter of the royal sage Kusadhaja, to become the wife of Narayana. She would avenge the wrong of Ravana by coming to earth as Sita, daughter of Janaka, to fulfil her desire to become the wife of

*Professor Macdonell's "Sanskrit Literature" Page 150—152.

†Professor do do do Page 155

‡Professor Weber's do do Page 191

Narayan Rama. It ascribed the cause of the separation of Rama and Sita to the curse of Bhṛigu upon Narayana when his wife was killed for sheltering the Asuras, as described in the Poulama Parva of the Mahabharata. Besides, the great sage Valmiki, as is clearly stated in the Annusasana Parva, Chapter XVIII, fell out with the fire-worshippers and was cursed, and worshipped God Siva to be absolved from the sin of the curse, equal to the murder of a Brahman.

Valmiki and Chavyana are identical and the Mahabharata mentioned that Rama Charita was written by a Bhṛigava. Veda describes the story of Cyavana, whose youth was restored by the Asvins. The myth of Poulama Parva in the birth of a son by Sukanya, the daughter of the Bidharva king, is explained. The other explanation may be given a thought, though it was not expressly mentioned to be so by the learned Pargiter.

"It shows that real tradition has been mixed up with mythology. Usanas Sukra is identified with the planet Venus, and among Bhṛigu's offspring are included gods and semi-divine personages. The Matsya account says Bhṛigu married Puloman's daughter Divya, and had by her the twelve Bhṛigu gods (Cyavana and Apnavana. Apnavana's son was Aurva and his son was Jamadagni. The best Mahabharata account says Bhṛigu had two sons Sukra having ahi who was Guru of the Daityas and gods (Sura) and Cyavana. Cyavana married Manu's daughter Arasi and had as son Aurva. Aurva's son was Keika who had a hundred sons the eldest of whom was Jamadagni, and Jamadagni had four sons of whom Rama was the youngest. The other Mahabharata passages will be considered separately. Cyavana it is often said, married Sukanya, daughter of Manu's son King Suryati and sacrificed for him. He is also connected with Manu's other son Prasadhra. His position is therefore clearly fixed, though late and especially Brahmanic, tales wrongly introduce him as existing at other periods and he is made the subject of fable even in the Rig Veda."

The family of Ravana originally belonged to the one of the Seven Patriarch sage Pulasta, married to the daughter Trinabindhu of the Vaisala kingdom. Ravana and Kumbhakarna became demons but his brother Bibhishan was not like them. It proves one important point, that Aryan Ravana and his brother Kumbhakarna were so transformed, like Kartabirjarjuna, that they were described by the poets with so many heads and hands to invent mischief to the causes of humanity to make people believe the wrong they did, lest people should disbelieve them as licensed poetic exaggerations.

In Vedic times it was not a man's birth but his culture and education that made him respected. It will be futile to try to convince anybody that the early civilisation of any country of the world was governed by any two, three or four social organisations. The Vedas do not admit any caste system or status or restrictions in society.

The Nishadas, Nagas, Daitvas, Danabas, Rakshas, Gandharvas and Dasys became oppressors or oppressors of the ancient civilisation, but all the same they were pure Aryans. Instances were not wanting to show that marriage alliances took place between India and Poulama, Yajna and Shatrashta, Nala and Damayanti, etc. They were called non-Aryan as they were not subjected to the rules and religion of the growing Aryan civilisation. The term Vratya or Apostate is frequently mentioned in the Atharva Samhita, and the country of Magadha is said to be full of these people. It proves beyond doubt that the uncivilised had been civilised and that they had again relapsed into their previous condition or were again transformed to their former state and condition of savagery by war for want of self-control and culture.

There are no traces of Hinduism in the Vedas or in the Aryan Epic civilisation. This is the best proof of Vedic and Epic inter-relationship besides the existence of the names of Vedic kings and events in the Epics. In the present scientific world, language plays an important part in settling many difficult questions regarding a clue to an important date or an important fact of past history which tradition or written history has failed to give. Professor Max Muller has found Sanskrit to be the mother of all the tongues of the world. The language and style of the Veda and Epic substantiate their inter-relationship. The great expert linguist Sir G. Grierson found that the language of the Rig Veda represents the archaic dialect of the Upper Doab. It was the place from where Aryan speech of the purest form spread all over India and in it the heroes of the Epics lived, moved and their glories were sung.

The learned Pargiter has been good enough to give us the important facts against the theory of the alleged entrance of the Aryans in the North Western Province of India.

"The broad result stands out clear that the Aikya stock, which began in a small principality at Allahabad, had dominated the whole of North India and down to Vidarbha, with the exception of the three Manva Kingdoms of Ayodhya, Vidha and Vaisali, and these had been influenced by the Aikya. So it is said the earth was dominated by the five races (Vamsa) descended from Jayati. This result agrees exactly with the Aryan occupation of India so that what we call the Aryan race is what Indian tradition calls the Aikya race and so Aikya-Aryan. The Saudyumna stool would no doubt be the Mundri race and its branch the Mon-Khmor folk in the east and in the intervening region it would have been subjugated by the Anava occupation, and also by a prior invasion of Bengal by new comers from the sea if the above surmise of such an invasion be true."

It is clearly stated by Vyasa to his son Suka that he prepared the Mahabharata from the 10,000 (ten thousand) Rikhs or Mantras of the Rig Veda and the mysteries of all the Vedas were revealed in the book he compiled, with all the didactic stories and true accounts, in such a way as would admonish faith, instruction and wisdom (Chapter 235 of Santi Parva, verses 13 and 14). The patriarch Bhishma in Chapter 78 preached to Yudhishthira the duties of Brahmanas and Kshatriyas, complaining bitterly against the conduct of the Brahman sages who were said to have attained exalted heaven by performing acts of cruelty against those who were, in fact, friends of humanity. The annotator Nilkantha illustrated the actions in this respect of Utanka, Parasara, etc., who were all leaders of the performers of Snake, Rikshas, etc. sacrifices. The kings were extolled as having attained the blissful region for doing a sinful act. It is said here that right is wrong and wrong is right in relation to virtue and vice according to place and time. The Brahmanas and kings do not commit any sin in self-defence or for compelling others to follow their duties and for punishing robbers. The Brahman void of Vedic learning and the king incapable of giving protection to his subjects are described like clouds that produce no rain.

The Uttarakanda Ramayana expressly mentioned that Sita was treated like a mother. Rama did not kill Ravana and Bali to usurp their kingdoms but to reward the good Bibhishana and Sugriva, who were unjustly chastised and exiled by their wicked brothers. The Mahabharata is the Itihasa Veda and the Ramayana is the Puranic Veda. In the sacrifice celebrations of both the Sutras Sankhyana and Asvalayana, on the eighth and ninth days of recitations, it is clearly explained that Itihasa Veda is the Matsya Samhita and Tarkhya Vaipasyata is the Purana Veda. Satapatha Brahmana says king Matsya Samhita and his people were water-dwellers. Satyabati was the adopted girl of the king of fishermen. Her hand was sought by a sage and was refused, and king Santanu got her by disinheritting the just right of Bhishma, his son by his former wife Ganga. It is also alleged that the author of the Mahabharata was descended from her and revived the Royal family of Santanu later on. Cyavana, the Valmiki, was purchased by Nahusa from the fishermen by the gift of a cow, and the fisherman went to heaven by the gift of that cow and Nahusa got the throne of heaven when the Asura Britta was killed and Indra was in hiding out of fear. This is the historic and Puranic connection of the Ramayana with the Veda. The Arthashastra of Kautilya itself speaks of what was then regarded as Veda to justify the expression used in both the Epics —

"The three Vedas, the Saman, Re and Yajur, are the three-fold (Scripture) The Atharva Veda and the Itihasa Veda are also Vedas" * . . . Itihasa means the Purana, Itivrtta (history), Akhyayika (tale), Udaharana (illustrative story), the Dharmasastra and the Arthasastra" †

The Mahabharata is said to be the fifth Veda, whereas the Ramayana is the second Veda in their respective tables of contents. The Pouranic and Organic theory of the creation of four castes from the four different functions of society or nation is given in the Rig Veda, Purusha Sukta, hymn, by Narayana to Nara. Both the Uttarakanda and the Ramayana preach the cult of Narayana and the defeat of Ravana, the follower of the Pasupat cult. This is the Vedic inter-relation of the Epics. The Pouranic theory of transformation of Devas and kings, etc., into beasts was exemplified in the sacrifice of king Marutta by Sambarta, the brother of Brihaspati, which was also described in the Mahabharata. But the difference in the description is marked and speaks of a time of the Pouranic age. Ravana appeared as a dog and the gods became beasts out of fear. Sambarta forbade the king Marutta, who was going to punish the evil doers, as they had already lowered themselves from Devas and Rakshas to inferior beasts. This is the implication of how gods and kings become beasts, when their hearts are full of selfish ends and fear, more or less moved by passion.

This is the word of the first couplet of Valmiki to the origin of the verse or couplet with which the idea of the Epic Ramayana was begun. Ravana was not killed until he took away Sita, who was Bedabati in a previous life as the daughter of the Royal sage Kusadhawaja, as recited in the Uttarakanda. The very name Bedabati implies a connection with the Pouranic fashion. Nor is this all. Agastya, the author of several Vedic hymns and marvellous mystic deeds, was the tutor and guide of Bharadwaja, the pupil of Valmiki, and was the adviser of the hero of the Ramayana. The final termination of the earthly career of Rama in the Uttarakanda is more than Pouranic and not natural nor historic like the Pandavas and Yadavas. The sage Durbasa appeared and made separation with Lakshman. A messenger from heaven in the form of an ascetic, he got audience with Rama alone. Durbasa was prevented from seeing Rama by Lakshman, as instructed, and was cursed by Agastya. This seemed to be the just punishment of Lakshman, who under false pretext took Sita and left her in the wood at the instance of Rama without a protest.

The Mahabharata was neither aristocratic like the Ramayana nor was it entirely under the influence of priests and Brahmins. The

* Book I, Chapter 3, (page 7)

† Book I, Chapter 5, (page 10)

‡ Canto 46, verse 54

composition of the Ramayana was later than that of the Mahabharata. It was at a time when the twice-born castes were jealous of their birth-right and looked down upon the servile people as the degenerate Sudras or non-Aryans. Even then there was no question of colour, for the hero and heroine of the Ramayana were not white but black, and Krishna, Arjuna and Draupadi of the other Epic also were. The ideal monarch, Rama, was praised for killing a Sudra who was transgressing the duties of Brahmana by practising Yoga, and for waging war against the two kings, one of demons and the other of gorillas, who had formed alliances and were ruling the earth after the cruel decimation of the Kshatriya race by Parasurama, a descendant of the Bhargava family. The Videha family was the custodian of the Pasupat cult bow which Rama broke. Rama chastised Parasurama by the exhibition of his power in breaking the bow of Pasupati and putting an end to the Pasupat cult and establishing the Narayana cult in its place by putting an arrow to Parasurama's bow. Rama not only revived the Kshatriya prowess, proving it superior to that of the Brahmans, but punished the ruling kings Ravana and Bali, both guilty of incestuous connection. He did not spare even his own faithful and tried Queen Sita when, after the fire ordeal, people began to gossip in private about her living alone in the abode of the demon for such a long time. The funeral rites of demon Ravana were performed with Vedic rites. This is the best proof on record that he was not a non-Aryan demon of Ceylon. The Pandavas and Yadavas as well as Rama and his brothers were not Vedic persons like Pururoba, Yayati, Nahusa, Devapi, etc.

* The Mahabharata is not only a Veda, says Dr W Hopkins, "it is so important a Veda that to read it is to dispense with the need of reading other Vedas" *

A distinct change had gradually come over the Indo-Aryans in the field of intellect to transform their religious outlook. One is inclined to enquire into the circumstances, historical as well as mythological, which led to the establishment of religious beliefs on an altogether different basis from what they had been in the Rig Veda. And it is quite possible that the large body of people, who had new forms of worship thrust upon them from above or from below, by the priests, would have liked to know how they could be reconciled with their older beliefs in order to be imbued with devotional fervour, without which no religion can have any permanent hold. It is for this reason that Bharata Samhita was composed, expressly with the object of elucidating the texts of the Vedas, under the pretext of which new popular deities loosely connected with the Vedic gods and goddesses were introduced

The processes by which this was done were two-fold, firstly, by the dedication of persons who had rendered distinguished services to the country, and secondly, by lowering the older Vedic deities in the estimation of the people.

In the Great War with the Asuras the gods won through the help of Kartika, the son of Siva, who began to receive worship for the great military services he rendered.

The cults of Pasupati and of Narayana were developed comprehensively so as to include the totality of all social activities of the Hindus. They became the basis of a higher and loftier conception of morality and constituted almost a puritanical reaction against the laxities and looseness which prevailed among all classes of people during the Vedic period. The intellectual freedom which the Vedic sages possessed led to a striking development of thought among them, and the period of Vedic culture may be regarded as the classical age of Indian history, which in spirit and achievements found a distant parallel in the extraordinary development of the classical mind of Europe. There is no reason to suggest inter-dependence, for the normal human mind has the same capacity for growth on the same lines in every country. But the elements which constitute the static factors of life and constitute character require definition in order that they might be binding upon all classes of men, for intellect divorced from ethical values tends to disintegrate everything that civilisation cherishes.

The Pasupati cult had a more popular origin. The great God Siva symbolises the materialistic principle of procreation, and Pasupati was identified with Rudra. The conflict which took place between Siva and Vishnu with regard to their shares in the sacrifice of Daksha, one of the progenitors of the universe, has its echo in the struggle between Rudra and Narayana in the Mahabharata for a similar reason. Dadhichi was the devotee of Rudra or Pasupati and Bhrigu and Vashistha those of Vishnu or Narayana. Dadhichi was the son of the sage Atharva, who is invoked with Angira and Bhrigu in the Pitriyajna in the Rig Veda. He left the Daksha Yajna when he found that no offering was being made to Siva. Like Vishnu, he had foretold the performer that he would not be able to complete the sacrifice, which actually happened in the end, until a compromise was made by the worship of Narayana. Britra, the great Asura, was a follower of Narayana* and his priest was Bhrigu and Sanat Kumar was his preceptor. Indra, who was the king of the Vedic deities, had to approach Narayana for the victory over Britra. Narayana told Indra that Britra would not be slain without the use of

* Britra Gita, Santi Parva

Dadhichi's bone, and Dadhichi was thus sacrificed. Thus Indra was humbled and Sibi Dadhichi was removed.

At the junction of the Ganges with the Sea (Kapila Ashrama—Gangi-Sagara) the great Rama made offerings to the manes of his departed ancestors and Yudhishthira offered prayers to Varuna, not as a Vedic god but through him to Narayana, the creator of the universe, to whom the prayer in question is referred.

"I bow to the God who protects the universe, I bow to the God who is beyond this universe. O Lord of gods come near this salt sea. The fire, the sun, the organ of generation, water, the goddess, the wheel of Vishnu, nectar and the navel of nectar. The god of fire is the organ that generated you (ocean). The earth is your body. Vishnu gave the seed that caused your being. You are the navel of nectar."

It was Tvashta who raised his grandson Britra to fight against Indra. The story of Bhagiratha, who offered oblations to the manes of his deceased ancestors, the sons of Sagara, by means of the water of the Ganges River carried into the Ashrama (hermitage) of Kapila, where they had been cursed by the great sage regarded as an Avatara of Narayana and which forms the basis of the Ramayana, testifies to the hold which ancestor worship had on the religious beliefs of the early Aryans. But it cannot be overlooked that Indra's hiding in the waters of a lake, being alarmed at the thought that the sage might still be living, recalls to one's mind its resemblance with the similar action of Duryodhana in hiding himself in the lake of Dwairayana at the last scene of the Kurukshetra War. The cult of ancestor worship has its reverse side in the story of Britra, who was the son of Trisira, who was again the son of Tvashta.

The Narayana cult was then introduced in the country of the Vatsas. Professor Rapson, in his "Ancient India," identifies the land of the Vatsas with the corner where the rivers Ganges and Jamuna meet at Prayaga or Allahabad.

"Vatsa, the region of Prayaga or Allahabad in the United Provinces. Its capital was Kancambi, which has been identified, though not with absolute certainty, with Kosam, the name borne by two adjacent villages (Kosam Inam and Kosam Khiraj) in the Allahabad district" †

Vincent Smith thinks that Kosam is an abbreviation of Kosambi, which is known to the Jains as Kosambinagara (*vide* pp 503-4 J R A S 1898). The remains of a fortress four miles in circuit at Kosam speak of its past great military strength. In Brown's "Coins of India" it is said that at the close of the 3rd century B C cast coins were issued

* Mahabharata Chapter CXIV, Vana Parva, page 174, Suktas 26, 27-28

† Professor E. J. Rapson's "Ancient India," page 170

with the names of local kings of Kausambi, Ayodhya and Mathura in the Brahmi script. The coins have a tree within a railing on the obverse. At the time of the Buddhist Chinese travellers there were more than 50 Devas temples and the non-Buddhists were very numerous and ten Buddhist monasteries were all in ruins. Keru's "Indian Buddhism" says that Kausambi, Mathura, etc., have hairs and nails of the Tathagata with stupas erected over the relics. The place was famous for being a centre of trade and religious activities of Ancient India.

The religion of Siva as a devotee of Narayana found acceptance among the people who lived around the river Saraswati in the Punjab in the kingdom of Srikantha. In Bana's "Harsacharita" it is mentioned as the famous place where the great king Harshabardhana's ancestors ruled. It is Thaneshwar, famous for the association of the god of the same name, whose temple Mahmud of Ghazni destroyed and then carried away the vast treasures under the idol. The place had become famous as the battlefield of the great Kurukshetra War. It was for these reasons that Siva and Narayana in their great fight, recorded in the Bharata Samhita, were described as Srikantha and Srivatsa respectively, as emblematic of the scars of fight and the centres of their worshippers.

Ultimately, as the cult of Narayana had more powerful Brahmanic families as its devotees and as it was philosophically much more developed, it prevailed over the Pasupat cult. Eventually all these new beliefs were brought together and given a consistent mythological shape in the cult of Narayana, which reconciled the old doctrines of Pitriyajna and Devayajna and marked a new epoch of intellectual progress. The conception of the Hindu Trinity, which owes its origin to circumstances mentioned above, became the starting point of a newer and more virile culture that far outstripped the Vedic culture that had culminated in six systems of Hindu philosophy and the metaphysics of the Upanishads. The evolution of Indian philosophy shows to what extent the progress of thought and political and economic factors were interdependent on one another in India, but the Bharata Samhita must not be confounded as a philosophical work. Its aim was highly practical, it aimed at teaching philosophy by examples, and as the connection between the Bharata Samhita and the Samkhya school has been explicitly mentioned in many places of the Mahabharata, it is necessary to show its position in the intellectual ferment that was going on in the land of the Vedic sacrifices. It is also necessary to refute the view, which is held by many scholars, that its main theme was the Great War between the Kurus and the Pandavas or

Kurus and Panchalas. The Bharata Samhita is not an heroic episode, but mainly a didactic one in its character.

Its main object was to uphold the claim of sound knowledge over the performances of sacrifices prompted by the desire of future reward and success. Men were induced to performance of acts sanctioned by the Vedas solely because they thought that they could avoid sorrow through them. A really wise man would not be tied to them, but would realise that God or deliverance can only be attained through knowledge. So real knowledge is the only means of liberation. In the Samkhya system knowledge is regarded as the only means of salvation, and hence it is inculcated by the Samkhya system of philosophy that it is knowledge which dispels sorrow, grief and fear. This philosophy is sometimes expressed in highly technical language and sometimes in a very popular manner in the Mahabharata which really forms the essence of the teaching of the Bharata Samhita and is called the Bharata Savitri and which runs as follows —

' From virtue profit and pleasure originate and for this it is sought. Virtue is eternal and pleasure and pain are no so. Soul is eternal and its frame is mortal. It is for this reason that one should not renounce virtue and religion either for the pleasures of the senses, cupidity or for fear. Thou sands of mothers, fathers, wives and sons come and went and others will come and similarly go away. All kinds of fear and joy only affect the ignorant but not the wise. The aim of man ought to be to realise the highest Brahma and ultimately attain to Him.

The Bharata Savitri, which may be regarded as embodying the popular digest of the Samkhya school of Philosophy, was amplified by stories, legends and fables in the Bharata Samhita, and as this was the kernel of the teachings of the Mahabharata, the Bharata Savitri was the connecting link between the two different compositions, between a didactic theme and the Epic poem. The historical background of the two was entirely different. The Bharata Samhita was meant to close a period of war and anarchy and the Mahabharata was composed to inaugurate a period of intense activity on the part of the Kshatriyas and to urge them onward to carry out their own duties as the upholders of the social structure of Aryan Brahmanism.

Nor must it be forgotten that the Bharata Samhita was closely connected with the performance of sacrifices. It emphasises again and again the superior value of moral virtues as against that of acts represented by Yajnas. That Heaven is attained by the performance of sacrifice is regarded as a crude notion*; the truly wise (those who followed the Samkhya system of philosophy) always condemn acts inspired by a desire for reward. In fact, it can be shown easily that the speculations of the Bharata Samhita have had their origin in the dis-

putes which took place among the learned and the dissenters with regard to the reward-yielding power of the Yajnas. Ultimately the school of Kapila prevailed over the orthodox school and a revolution was accomplished in the region of thought and practice among the Brahmins, which was of very great moment in the cultural history of the Aryans. Subsequently the purely ethical and the Yogic philosophy of the Sāṃkhya school reached a higher and more interesting phase of development through the introduction of one exclusive personal God immersed in meditation by Nārada, followed by Veda Vyāsa, whose followers were called Ekāntins. The slaughter of animals was condemned, and though the practice was not abandoned altogether it became greatly modified.

The Brahmins gradually adapted themselves to the higher ethics and spiritual notions by changing the etymology of their name from the mere mutterer of hymns to the knower of Brahma, and sacrifices were greatly discredited in the school of Kapila. The metaphysics which are attributed to Kapila define Prakṛti (Nature) and Soul (Ātma) in a completely different manner from the Vedantist. According to the Sāṃkhya view, soul is invested with the attribute of consciousness, nature is a blind and inanimate object, intelligence is the offspring of nature, and is therefore by itself only a matter, just as the ray of the sun is merely an inanimate object, but becomes light by its contact with the sensation of sight. Intelligence is in the same way incapable of consciousness. It is only when soul resides in it, that it reaches the plane of understanding.

The Vedantist does not accept the view that intelligence is blind. He says that the world of will or intelligence lies beyond consciousness and unconsciousness, and that because it is the anti-thesis of true knowledge, it is called Avidyā. Avidyā is defined in the West by Kant as *think in itself*, by Schopenhauer as blind will, "as the permanent possibility of sensation" in the English language. The word Avidyā implies the fact that it is related to true knowledge as contradiction (contraries) and therefore they inhere in the same thesis. According to the Sāṃkhya school Prakṛti (Nature) is independent and self-sufficient. The same is true of Jīvātma (the individual soul) and they are connected by means of Paramātmā, like so many beads in a rosary. The logical compactness which one finds in the metaphysics of the Brahma Sūtra is a strong proof of its posterior origin to the school of Kapila.

Kapila has laid too much emphasis on non-violence, but Veda-Vyāsa, the propounder of Brahma Sūtra, *viz.*, the Vedānta, has a more

comprehensive view of life. The question, who is a real Brahmin, was very often debated. In philosophical speculations of the Upanishads, the Sankhya and the Vedāntic school, were occasioned by the discontent of the Kshatriyas, who could not meet the extravagant demands of the Brahmins at the sacrifices. Consequently, Kapila, who was a Brahmin sage, gave a new definition of the word Brahmana which has been quoted already. The outlook of Kapila in matters of sacrifices was too revolutionary. He condemned sacrifices outright. But the sacrifices were very popular and useful institutions, and if the orthodox dogmas were purged of their crude character they could be revised on a healthy basis. Vyasa in his definition of the word Brahman follows closely on that of Kapila. It shows the alliance between the two schools in respect of ethics but Kapila had condemned penances, and Veda Vyasa gave to it a higher meaning.

Veda Vyasa did not condemn sacrifices altogether as acts, but urged that they should be tempered with mercy. Penances were also sanctioned, if they were performed in a proper spirit. In the Upanishadic school, in which the Kshatriyas with their Brahmanic allies disserted on the mystic partnership of the Brahman, the chief head of the sacrifice, and the school of Kapila, from which was evolved the notion of a personal God Nārāyaṇa, deemed higher than the great Brahman who was said to have sprung from Him, animal sacrifices were now discredited, but a personal God could be reached by the pursuit of any of these paths, viz., the Kriyā Kanda (i.e., the path of Acts), the Jñāna Kanda (the path of knowledge), absolute renunciation and the path of concentration, meditation and faith. The bifurcation of the two main systems of thought from the Vedic school is a striking proof of the continuity of Indian culture, which strongly reacted on the material plane.

In fact, the doctrine of concentration, i.e., Eikāntic, is laid stress on in both.* Without denying the difficulty of reconciling the idea of an imminent personal god, which is the main theme of the Bharata Samhita, with the plurality of souls devoid of common origin, which is propounded by Kapila, it must be admitted that the school of Veda-Vyasa grew out of that of Kapila. It is expressly mentioned in Santi Parva, Chapter 352, that Veda-Vyasa, who was deeply immersed in contemplation about the nature of the supreme cause, by taking his stand on the Samkhya system of Yoga could not arrive at any satisfactory conclusion about it. The riddle of the phenomena of the world was revealed to him by his knowledge and realisation of Nārāyaṇa.

* Mahabharata, Chapter 346

On the contrary, however, there are many passages in the Mahabharata in which it is stated that Narayana is the object of worship in the Samkhya system of philosophy. It is quite clear, however, that in any case, Vyasa's teaching claims to improve on Kapila's view.

The Bharata Samhita is based upon the Samkhya school of Kapila. In fact, the whole relevant portions of the Bharata Samhita have been strung together round the Samkhya school, and it was by means of this that a bridge was constructed across the old thought of the priests and the new thought of the Kshatriyas. The Brahmins rose to the height of intellectual subtlety and formulated a system which in its popular form sanctioned the sacrifices; not as the chief means to the attainment of salvation, but certainly as a subsidiary one. The philosophical theory of the Bharata Samhita is propounded in the dialogue between Kapila and Svyama Rashmi, and this was the basis of the Bharata Samhita. The historical personality of Kapila is sometimes denied by many scholars, but there cannot be any doubt that "Kapila was a real (human) philosopher and not a mere shadow of a divinity". He is in fact the only founder of a philosophical system known to the Epic. He is not only the oldest, he is the supreme seer identical with Agni with Siva also and with Vishnu" (Hopkins—"The Great Epic of India", pages 97 and 98). Kapila was not an atheist. The great Kapila vanquished the Kshatriyas in their metaphysical disputation and effected a synthesis in the realm of conflicting ideologies.

It is borne out in the Mahabharata, etc. The Kshatriya king Janaka of Videha was a great scholar of the Upanishadic lore. To him many a Brahmin scholar came for spiritual enlightenment. From Janaka the teacher to Janaka the disciple is an interesting metamorphosis which is brought about by the school of philosophy founded by Kapila. It was not for nothing that Janaka learnt new lessons of the Samkhya school of thought from the students of Kapila, Panchacika and Sulava, a female devotee of note, who read a lecture on true chastity, not one which has connection with flesh, blood and senses. The school of Kapila gives to such a Brahmin prominence over others. He regards renunciation through knowledge as the highest act entitling a person to liberation. It has already been shown, the background of worldliness against which Kapila uttered his word of protest. It is a doctrine as abstruse to an ordinary layman as the Upanishad. Kapila exposes the fallacy of performing sacrifices with the object of attaining reward of heaven in after life. The Brahmanic stories which one gets in the Epics as well as in the Puranas have preserved the essential features of this revolution which he has achieved.

The repeated insistence in the Mahabharata, supported by the evidence of the Ramayana, on the identity between Samkhya system and the Narayana cult is well known

The Bharata Samhita was confined to the propounding of the Narayana cult and some semi-historical and semi-legendary stories, which were introduced to show the inter-relation between theories and practice of religion. It must have been a very short work. The object for which the Bharata Samhita was compiled is stated very clearly in the Anularambika. It was a book composed chiefly to bring out the full meaning of the Vedic knowledge and religion and to popularise its practice among men. The Narayana cult was the most important contribution of the Bharata Samhita. Nor must one leave out in this connection the various legends which had gathered round the performance of sacrifice and the accounts which were narrated at the time of their celebration. It was a very short, but a very popular book with the Brahmans and their followers, the ancient kings. The Bharata Samhita was not composed at a time when the reading of the Vedas became the proud privilege only of the Brahmans.

The original Bharata Samhita was lost when it assumed the comprehensive title of the Mahabharata. The most difficult thing would be to recover the original first edition of the Bharata Samhita and the Mahabharata. The aim of the two books seems to have been identical but they underwent so many changes and additions with the progress and exigencies of the times, that it would be mere waste of energy and time to present them separately, as there are very few people who will be interested in them. Besides very few people take any interest in the original texts of books of this nature. Dramas and novels are not the books of interest. The great Vedantist philosopher Sankaracharya said that the Mahabharata was meant for those who were debarred from studying the Vedas and Vedanta *

In the days of the Vedas the question of hero-worship did not arise. The Vedas were not ancient histories to record every event and the deeds of kings. The Vedas record the sentiments of ancient seers in their hymns about the mysterious unknown, the maker of this world, or to propitiate the gods. They recorded the different ages of learning, culture and religion in the acts of chanting hymns, offering libations in the different sacrifices, absorbing meditations and concentration of mind, restraining the powerful senses and their enjoyments. The Vedas do not give the chronology of Indian kings or priests with any accurate figures of their dominations and influences in the country

* Macdonell's "Sanskrit Literature," Page 289

Civilisation and religion went hand in hand, and they spread by inter-relations of trade and commerce. Indian products were carried to all parts of the world from time immemorial, in Indian ships. It dates back earlier than 2,000 B. C. But the Indian traders were clever enough not to disclose their trade routes to others and they enjoyed the monopoly so long as they were not discovered. Babylonian history gives the date of its civilisation so far back as 2,458 B. C. and admits it to have come from districts lower down. The history of civilisation in India dates back long before this. Civilisation is the growth of prosperity. The manners, customs, luxury and wealth of India attracted the eyes of world-conquerors like Alexander the Great.

It is not admitted by all reasonable students of the Indian Epics that the Mahabharata in its first elements is as old as the Sutra period of the Vedas. If the age of the Mahabharata has to be decided from the literary composition of Sanskrit literature or the names of the Vedic Kings, accounts of whom appear therein, it will undoubtedly be before the Ramayana, notwithstanding the fact that the latter's hero is said to have belonged to an earlier age, the Treta. The nucleus of the Epics, the Bharata Samhita, is older than the ages of these Epics. There is a clear reference in the table of contents that Brahma was invoked by the author when he conceived the idea of making the book. He was advised to take the help of the son of Siva, Ganesha the reputed god, who is even now worshipped to forestall all abstracts in the way of success. The author originally composed the book consisting of 8,800 verses, but it was so condensed, stiff and mysterious that even the learned Ganesha took time to grasp its true meaning. The task of making it clear devolved upon Veda Vyasa, who did not publish his work till Dhritarastra, Pandu and Bidura died, and it took him full three years. It is admitted that Narada inspired the author of the Ramayana before he took it up.

The reference to Brahma in both the Epics means nothing but makes them in a way advocates of the Vedic rites and sacrifices. All the heroes of the Epics were born out of Vedic sacrifices performed by the renowned Vedic priests. The reputed authors Vyasa and Valmiki represent the distinct lines of the priests Vasistha and Bhrigu, who were called Mitra Varuniya. Vasistha was the favourite of king Indra and thus became the priest of the Bharata race. The comprehensive term—Bharatas, as an ancient Aryan race, has a historical foundation in the Rig Veda. It is said that the similarity in language and thought between the Persian Avesta and the Rig Veda gives just ground to conclude that they had lived together for some time before they were

separated. The term 'Aryan' derives its origin from Sanskrit 'Arya' and Avestan 'Airya'.

The story of divine punishment inflicted on the builders of the tower of Babel made the world once believe that Hebrew was the most primitive language of mankind, but the scientific researches of philologists has led to the discovery that Sanskrit is the mother of the tongues of the world. It is the language in which Vedic hymns were uttered and handed down to posterity, which has merged in time into the classical Sanskrit of the Epics, continuing as it does, stereotyped forms of some trichisms and irregularities to which modern grammarians take exception. The ancient local dialects are called Prakrits or natural dialects, precisely in the same way as the Roman languages have sprung from the Latin dialects of the common people. Prakrit became the medium of religious doctrines meant for the masses, who did not attend Vedic sacrifices and became Jains. It is improved into the literary language Pali in Ceylon.

The Śaṅkhyā Brahmin supplies an important link in the history of religion and its centres. The ancient Vedic literature is styled revelation or Śruti. The Vedas and their Brahminas refer to a religion of works, whereas the Aranyakas and Upanishads to that of knowledge. The joys of earth and heaven in this and after life alike appeared transient as being the fruits of the religion of works. The new revolution of thought appeared in the object of the religion of knowledge, whose chief aim was to avert being fast-bound in the chain of mundane existences in heaven or in hell, determined by the good or evil on the day of judgment. It was then realised that there was no real or essential difference between the soul of the individual and that of the world. Like the clay vessels of different names Atman is represented in all men only with different appellations. The release from the illusion or Māya can only be attained by right and true knowledge that everything besides Atman which seems to exist, is nothing but illusion.

The time of the Upanishads was really a sort of revolt against the ceremonials and exclusiveness of the Brahmins. The sacrifices had become the monopoly of the priestly classes of different gotras. In this revolt not only the great kings like Janaka and Janmejaya I, but ladies like Sūyā, Gargī and Maitreye played prominent parts in intelligent discussions on the question. The Upanishads and the Vedānta system of philosophy then showed the marvellous development of the age with the fulness and subtlety of the learned men and women of the day. The courts of Janaka and Benares became famous for this.

The famous Brahmans Gaigya and Balaki became disciples of the king of Benares, Ajatsatru and Gargi and Maitreya discoursed with Yajnavalkya, the high priest of the king of Videha, while Sulava censured the king himself as he could not realise or grasp the instructions of Panchacikha. The mention of Jainism cannot be taken as an interpolation, as it originated with the father of Bharata, the founder of Jainism, Risava.

Brahmanism, which had at one time assumed the form of congregational worship at the sacrifices, soon ceased to be so with the idea of a practical rule of life for an abstract right knowledge as the true means of securing the freedom of soul in the appetites of blood and flesh of the frail human body. It was for this reason that the ancient monastic cultural institutions soon became congregational centres of great dimensions, performing a twelve years sacrifice at Naimisharanya to protect the interests of the priests and their disciples as well. The result was that large numbers of Puranas were manufactured. The reciting of religious books in congregations appeared to be a very great necessity and a class of men, the Sutas, was trained specially to perform this task properly. It is for this reason that all the Puranas were the discourses between Sounaka and Souti, irrespective of the time and place of the birth of these Puranas in a stereotyped fashion of beginning and end. The Bharata Samhita was not of that type. The two Indian Epics, the Ramayana and the Mahabharata, were not cast in the same fashion. The language of Brahmanism is always and everywhere Sanskrit, but for the mass education and conversion Prakrit and Pali are found to be the medium of religious instructions to Jains and Buddhists. Professor Macdonell says —

"Sankhya, which, for the first time in the history of the world, asserted the complete independence of the human mind and attempted to solve its problems, solely by the aid of reason. On the Sankhya were based the two heterodox religious systems of Buddhism and Jainism, which denied the authority of the Veda. Still more heterodox was the Materialist philosophy of Charvaka which went further and denied even the fundamental doctrines common to all other schools of Indian thought, orthodox and unorthodox, the belief in transmigration dependent on retribution and the belief in salvation or release from transmigration. The two non-Brahmanical religions, flourished the lokayata ("directed to the world of sense"), or materialistic schools, usually called that of the Charvakas from the name of the founder of the doctrine. It was regarded as peculiarly heretical, for it not only rejected the authority of the Vedas and Brahmanic ceremonial but denied the doctrines of transmigration and salvation accepted by all other systems. The strong scepticism of the Charvakas showed itself in the rejection of all the means of knowledge accepted by other schools, excepting perception. To them matter was the only reality. Soul they regarded as nothing but the body with the attribute of intelligence. They held it to be created when the body is formed by the combination of elements, just as the power of intoxication arises from the mixture of certain

ingredients. Hence with the annihilation of the body the soul also is annihilated. A transmigration they affirm but the true nature of things, is the cause from which phenomena proceed. The existence of all that transcends the senses they deny sometimes with an admixture of irony. Thus the highest being they regard as being of the kind whose existence is proved by the perception of the whole world. Hell is earthly pain produced by earthly causes and salvation is the dissolution of the body. Even in the attribution of their text book to Brihaspati the name of the preceptor of the sages, a touch of irony is to be detected. The religion of the Preliminary is like a never handling. The Vedas, say the Charvakas are only the mere material objects of knowledge and are tainted with the three blemishes of falsehood, life, and destruction and they say. Vedic teachers are impostors whose doctrines are mutually destructive and the ritual of the Brahmins is useful only as a means of livelihood. If they ask "an animal sacrificed reaches heaven, why does the sacrificer not rather offer his own father?"

On the moral side the system is pure Hedonism. For the only end of man is here stated to be sensual pleasure which is to be enjoyed by neglecting as far as possible the pains connected with it just as a man who desires fish takes off the scales and bone. "While life remains let a man live happily, let him feed on ghee even though he run into debt when once the body becomes ashes, how can it ever return again?"

The followers of Charvaka were then called the Yavans or Mlechhas as they were the most hated of all beings and worse than the foreigners whom the traders saw.

It reveals the ridiculous age of innovation which only increased the presumption of man. Truth warns against impending danger, but malice only reviles for the past. The fair appearance of free-will often permits the frightful ravages of evil spirits which a mortal weilds to rule the difficult helm of destiny, if he be not permitted to declare himself either a prophet of the almighty or even a philosophy—as it was with Charvaka. No one beholds the great Creator as He veils himself within the spirit, soul or his own eternal laws.

"Wherefore a god the scepter like Charvak seems to assert
The world itself suffices for itself"

The voice of the majority is no proof of justice, as truth is created for wisdom and beauty for the feeling heart. There are evil spirits who take their seat in the human breast where there is no conscience to guard it, like cankerworms of boasted reason. They consume all tender flowers, growing on human hearts. Inclinations change and make the unstable public judgment, like the tide, flow and ebb. The power of tyrants can only bind the hands, but the devotion of the heart rises free to God.

Charvaka is dead with his faith, which gives no peace or breath to life. The fickle multitude and their king, who ruled the earth, are

* Professor Macdonell's "Sanskrit Literature," Pages 336, 403-8

† Professor Macdonell's "Sanskrit Literature," Page 407

gone. It points a great lesson—to become a virtuous man. Mind is contracted within a narrow circle. It is man who expands it with his loftier objects. He who has given satisfaction to the best of his time, has lived for all ages. Some unbelieving people like Charvaka, asserted that nothing could be seen, because nothing was behind it, and a ruler like Durjodhana with his ignorant followers heard and believed what Charvaka said. He was exposed to posterity as a bright example of one who ruled to make a mockery of men. He was seized and hastily removed in spite of all his majesty of power, strength of arms and allies, by a man whom he had exiled and robbed by unjust means. This is the metaphysical bearing of the Bharata Samhita on the Mahabharata.

Regarding the Ramayana, Professor Macdonell in his "Sanskrit Literature" says:—

"There is much more probability in the opinion of Jacobi, that the Ramayana contains no allegory at all, but is based on Indian mythology. The foundation of the second part would thus be a celestial myth of the Veda transformed into a narrative of earthly adventures according to a not uncommon development. Sita can be traced to the Rigveda, where she appears as the Furrow personified and invoked as a goddess. In some of the Grihya Sutras she again appears as a genius of the ploughed field, is praised as a being of great beauty, and is accounted the wife of Indra or Parjanya, the rain god. There are traces of this origin in the Ramayana itself. For Sita is represented (i. 66) as having emerged from the earth when her father Janaka was once ploughing, and at last she disappears underground in the arms of the goddess Earth (vi. 97). Her husband, Rama would be no other than Indra, and his conflict with Ravana, chief of the demons would represent the Indra Britra myth of the Rigveda. This identification is confirmed by the name of Ravana's son being Indrajit, 'Conqueror of Indra', or Indrasatru, 'Foe of Indra' the latter being actually an epithet of Britra in the Rigveda. Ravana's most notable feat, the abduction of Sita, has its prototype in the stealing of the cows recovered by Indra. Hanumat, the chief of the monkeys and Rama's ally in the recovery of Sita, is the son of the wind-god, with the patronymic Maruti, and is described as flying hundreds of leagues through the air to find Sita. Hence in his figure perhaps survives a reminiscence of Indra's alliance with the Maruts in his conflict with Britra, and of the dog Sarama, who, as Indra's messenger, crosses the waters of the Rasa and tracks the cows. Sarama re-urs as the name of a demoness who consoles Sita in her captivity. The name of Hanumat being Sanskrit the character is probably not borrowed from the aborigines. As Hanumat is at the present day the tutelary deity of village settlements all over India, Professor Jacobi's surmise that he must have been connected with agriculture, and may have been a genius of the monsoon, has some probability.* The careful investigations of Professor Jacobi have shown that the Ramayana originally consisted of five books only (ii-vi)† "For the tribal hero of the former has in the latter been transformed into a national hero, the moral ideal of the people, and the human hero (like Krishna in the Mahabharata) of the five genuine books (excepting a few interpolations) has in the first and last become deified and identified with the god Vishnu, his divine nature in these additions being always present to the minds of their authors"‡

*Professor A. A. Macdonell's "Sanskrit Literature," pages 312-313

† Professor A. A. Macdonell's "Sanskrit Literature," page 304.

‡ Professor A. A. Macdonell's "Sanskrit Literature," page 305

The Ramayana owes its existence to the Bharata Samhita and is in itself a triumph over the victory of the Narayana cult over the Pasupati cult. Siva is represented to be the best of all Yogis or ascetics. The Mahabharata gave the clue to Valmiki's eminence*. It is said that Valmiki, the author of the Ramayana, himself fell out with certain fire sacrificers in a discussion which they found against Veda and cursed him a guilty Brahmanicide. He practised severe religious austerity to win the favour of the God Siva by meditation and was not only purged of all his sin but was blessed with a boon to acquire great fame in the world (S-to-verse 1). This was how an ant hill grew round him and entitled him to be called Valmiki.

The story of Chyavana coincides with it in every detail. He became successful when King Sarjati's daughter, Sukanya, struck his eyes and made him adopt the life of a householder and follow the path of love instead of concentration and meditation only without realising the spirit of love and its centre in the great Creator of the universe. The system of Yoga and sacrifices he condemned as killing the senses, like a hunter taking the lives of poor innocent beasts and birds of the wood following the mere profession of livelihood or pleasure of hunting. Everyone is aware of the famous exclamation which gave birth to the origin of the Ramayana and made him famous.

He first realised that proper environments are necessary to keep one in spirit, so that the mind might be free from sordid and remorseful thoughts. For this meditation cannot go on without a companion to attend to the mechanical needs of a person, to maintain health and home. If the essence of home and health is sacrificed how can a nation or religion grow to foster a healthy nation? The woman who does not want to make a home must be undermining a nation, and if a man having no idea of good conduct and morality propagates a race he raises nothing but a nation of hunters. Medicines and treatment are not necessary where the housewife performs the part of a doctor in diet. The ancient seers inculcated the necessity of having a housewife who knew how to devise and prepare a correct régime of food and drink in pleasing variety to promote taste and health. It then required the magic prescription of herbs and pills by expert doctors. He found that women must be taught not only to look after the food and drink but to create environments conducive to meditation and teaching the young generation the true ideals of life by practising forbearance in actual life instead of Yoga system through absolute abstention, which is nothing less than human crucifixion of feelings and love, so very necessary for the true growth of religion and culture.

* Anushasana Parva, Chapter XVIII (Mahabharata)

The following by Sita, the daughter of a king, of Rama in his exile and her residence in the luxurious palace of gaiety in Ceylon, in the midst of all sorts of allurements and with the prospect of happiness, could not dissuade her from the right and the background of thousands of the most beautiful girls of the world not being able to control the rapacity of Ravana, are the wonderful delineation of Valmiki. The girl, absorbed in the thought of re-union with her consort, and the great monster, the eloper, biting his lips with anger at not being able to lead her astray from the path of rectitude. The great author perhaps compared the performances of sacrifices with the fire ordeal of Sita before the consensus of public opinion so very revolutionary to truth and justice. Rama is described as an incarnation of Narayana to foil the boons of Brahma and Siva, which Ravana had secured. It is said in the Mahabharata that Ravana was a follower of Siva and performed a sacrifice with the flesh of his own body and was blessed with the power of creating new creatures and animals. He was extolled there as endowed with one hundred faces instead of ten.*

The great author excited the curiosity of Sita by presenting a golden deer, and she requested her beloved consort to capture it. She made Lakshman leave her when she heard a voice say that her husband was in danger. Ravana was made to appear in the guise of an ascetic and showed the many pitfalls to which ascetics were then liable for their forced total abstention from the senses. Total abstention is as disastrous as excessive gratification of the senses, in which Ravana indulged. His adversary Rama had one wife, Sita, whom he loved and admired; but when he was blessed with an heir and a son he abstained from the pleasures of the senses in order to devote his mind to the good of his subjects and country. He renounced everything as an incarnation of Narayana, as the Uttarakanda of the Ramayana states. This is the real Ramayana of Valmiki or Chyavana, with the accounts of Mandhata, Kartabirjaryuna, Kapila, Narada, etc., Vedic personages. This was composed in the old dialogue form of speech distinct from the later Ramayana, now believed to be the real original one. The current Ramayana's appendix is reputed to be the Yogavasistha. Dr Keith says —

"Often closely allied with Vedanta ideas, but, like the developments of that system, powerfully affected by the Samkhya and with strong affinities to the conceptions of which the Yoga philosophy is an ordered exposition, there exists a large mass of theological and mystical speculation. A comparatively early specimen not much distinguished from the Vedanta is the *Yogavasistha* (Ed. Bombay, 1911, Trans. Calcutta, 1909) which is reputed an appendix to the Ramayana and deals with all manner of topics, including final release, it is moderately old, as it was summarised in the ninth century by the Gauda Abhinanda in the *Yogavasisthasara*. An imitation

* *Pide Annusasana Parva*, Chapter XIV, 88-85 verses

of the Mahabharata, the Jaimini Bharata (Of Weber, Monatsber BA 1862, pp 10ff., 362ff.), of which Book xiv, the Asamedhikaparran, alone has come down to us, is intended rather as a text book of Vaisnavas etc. The sectarian literature of the Pancharatra school of Vaisnavas long best known from the late Varada Paucharatra (Ed BI 1865) (perhaps 16th cent.), is better represented by a large number of Samhitas which may be of considerable age the Ahirbudhnya (Ed Madras, 1916 See E O Schrader, Intr to the Pancharatra (1916), Gorindacarva, JRAS 1911 pp 951ff.), which has been claimed to belong to the period of the later Epic, gives no very favourable impression of the literature which mixes Vedanta and Samkhya ideas in a curious way" *

It will be of great interest here to mention that the author of Uttara-charita followed Uttarakanda, as is clear from the word "Uttara" in the beginning of the book Yogabasishta says that Bhrgu lost his wife by the horrible cry of Nrsingha Deva when slaying Hiranyakashipu and bore a grudge against him, referred to in the Poulama Parva and Santu Parva along with the rape committed by Ravana on his daughter-in-law Rambha, which resulted in his ultimate death. It is recited in the Uttarakanda of the Ramayana.

The four aims of existence in the different stages of life were then defined to be hermit life of education, homelife of preserving love and happiness, life of retirement from bustle and activity to become teachers to find out truth and teach students, and last though not least, the final emancipation of soul to rest in peace in the eternal soul. Statecraft was not then the material end of kingly life. Religion is the blessedness arising out of the knowledge of God, it is the sincere outcome of a belief in God. Modes of life beget modes of thought, actions and their growth to influence head and heart spiritually as well as physically. If one effaces God from his head and heart the world becomes desolate, and one commits suicide both physically and spiritually. Sublime are the temple steps of religion as the stars shine in the immeasurable sky above. Whatever is mighty in nature—storm, thunder, flood, volcanic eruption, death or annihilation—speaks of the power of God behind it.

Indian philosophy grew out of centuries of development, seldom contesting the original dogmas, which justified some kind of practical significance. The spiritual well being was at first conceived in self-control, and the philosophic wisdom was the spiritual nature above all desires and craving of blood and flesh. The experiences of the ascetics and wisdom of the Upanishads are incontestable. Sankaracharya, the greatest of all Vedantist scholars, urged that it being impossible to come to finality by logical reasons, which appeared so very differently to different angles of vision, it was better to depend on the Scriptures for the final ascertainment of truth. This made an opening for the Epics

* Professor A. B. Keith's "A History of Sanskrit Literature," Pages 479-80

and Puranas to occupy a very high place in the Indian mind. The Devapurana and Pitriyajna of the Upanishads reveal the doctrines of emancipation and re-birth. A man of deeds is liable to re-birth, whereas the man of knowledge never returns to earth. The wise found it very convenient to explain away the inequalities of this life as results of the past life, without entertaining the untoward circumstances. The theory of deed or Karma, re birth and emancipation introduced the fiction of the Epics and Hindu mythology. These dogmas found expression in the characters of the Epics with the recognised historical events and incidents to lend colour; as it were, to establish some sort of scientific truth with the actual experiences of the national heroes of the land so much loved and revered. But all these dogmas were challenged and replaced ultimately by the devotional ideal of another sect who were of spiritual enjoyment in Bhakti, like the altruistic goal of the Mahayan Buddhists.

Dr. Hopkins discussed the inter-relation of the two Indian Epics and is positively of the opinion that there are good reasons to support that the Uttarakanda of the Ramayana and the Bharata Samhita bear a close affinity. He says —

"The common tales that remain apart from this phase of the poems, are few, and such as may be easily attributed to the general stock of legendary tradition. When we have peeled off the outer layer (and in it are included with one exception, if it be an exception all the references to Valmiki in the great Epic), we have left two epics, one of which is a complete whole the other a congeries of incongruous stories grouped about a central tale both built on the same foundation of phrase, and proverb and in part over the same ground of literary allusion, both with heroes of the same type (whose similarity is striking), and both arranged on the same general plan, a court scene, where the plot is laid, a period of banishment in a forest scene, followed by a city scene, where an ally is gained, and then by battle-scenes. One of these Epics claims priority, but the claim after all is not that the great poet invented Epic poetry, but that he first wrote an Epic in Sloka verse in a kavya or artistic style. As the Ramayana is mainly in Slokas of a more refined style than the Mahabharata and the Kavya or artistic element is really much more pronounced, and as, further, it is highly probable that Epic poetry was first written in the mixture of rougher Sloka and tristubh characteristic of the Mahabharata, this claim so stated, may in general be allowed, without impugning the relatively greater age of the other Epic. Professor Jacobi admits that the metre of the Ramayana is more refined, but the explanation he gives is that it was a product of that East where poetic art was first developed."

He says "Aparatamas is called the Teacher of the Vedas ("termed by some Pracinagarbha"), and Narada knew the difference between Samkhya and Yoga, but he does not give any such place to Valmiki. Narada and Aparatama are the authors of the Bharata Samhita, as is evident from the Narayani section of the Mahabharata.

Dr Hopkins has published books entitled "India Old and New" and "The Great Epic of India", giving his own views in a way only to ridicule the Ancient Indian Gods and their worshippers. It confirms the wisdom of the ancient seers in banning the reading of religious books by heretics.

One can hardly agree with the cogency of the arguments of a man whose main object has been to establish that the Christian ideal, legends and religion were not borrowed from any other religion of the East. For it is held that the life, events and miracles of Sri Krishna, Buddha, tally with those of Christ.

In the Rig Veda the divinity of speech (Vāc) says that she elects whom she loves and makes him mighty. She is simply Saraswati, the deity of speech, which flows with eloquence like the tide of a river which is transparent, carries everything with it, quenches the thirst and moves the heart to exclaim with relief 'Ah' and makes the body cool. The eloquent argument of Western scholars like Dr Hopkins would have been uttered with the triumphant voice of victory, had it not been for the fact that the geological history of a country is responsible for its religious and philosophical evolution and culture. The conditions under which gods and philosophy grew are no longer a matter of dispute, much less to scholars who have studied ancient Sanskrit literature and philology.

Myriads of ages have come and gone. Nowhere but in India the angry elements of Nature fight with such conspicuous ferocity as to create notions in the minds of people to ascribe divinity to natural forces. The deities of Ancient India in fish, tortoise, boar, lion-headed man, dwarf, axe-bearing Parasurama, bow-and-arrow-bearing Rama, plough-shouldering Balarama and last, though not least, loving hero of peace and divinity Sri Krishna to make the world realise the attributes of the meditative philosophic Narayana, were demonstrating different divisions of geological periods, Palaeozoic, Tertiary, etc. The primeval geological ages in the order of the theory of evolution is manifested in the Hindu Puranic incarnations of God.

The Epics describe the great truth that the test proves the worth of a man, exposes his vice and brightens his virtue, for he who wins without resistance can hardly be credited with the glory of success. In conflict and adversity, when one gets the mastery of one's failings, a man proves his culture and wisdom. No one can employ himself better than in purifying his innate nature by culture and fortitude, as if regulated by the will and spirit of God in the silent working of the inner man. The conception of Narayana is the inner man of the universe.

who was roused by the strong will of Brahma, the enlightened soul who seizes every external circumstance to work out the salvation of the body and soul to become a fitting example to the world of illusion, merged in sensual desires, jealousy, vanity and ambition and sinking daily to perdition. The greatest punishment of God seems to have been the infliction of ignorance and absence of reason and knowledge. The noblest and the worthiest are the objects of jealousy to the inferior class of men who are called the Asuras.

The Asuras and Devas were the divisions of human creation in the early prosperous days when all men were good, which was called the Satya Yuga. It was not till the success of one created envy in the other that the unsuccessful, idle men of sensual pleasures nurtured in them envy, jealousy and insolence and became inclined to do wrong and mischief to others. Calumny they drink with greedy ears, insolence is the natural result of prosperity, and jealousy and envy are the outcome of the uncultured mind. The ill-omened curses of ignorance took possession of the sons of the same father Kasyapa for want of culture and education. They did not inherit virtue and vice from their father, it was their own creation. It is the curse of a family, the curse of a nation, when the majority of men suffer from vanity and vacation of spirit. Then war and fighting become inevitable. This is depicted in the early three Parvas of the Mahabharata. With the description of the war between the Devas and Asuras, which resulted in the victory of the Devas, the Bharata Samhita began.

Many Vedic matters actually formed part of the Bharata Samhita, but were incorporated in the Mahabharata in such a vague manner that Western scholars conclude that the three Parvas—Paushya, Poulama and Astika—lie outside the scope of the Mahabharata proper.

Samjaya and Soumatrī (Lakshman) are the two important characters ancillary to the heroes to develop the theme of the two Epics. In Panchavimsa Brahmana one finds mention of these two names in the chant relating to the victory of the Devas and Asuras and the death of a female Asura who used to lick off all the soma by Sumitra. The great hero Lakshman, the son of Sumitra, was called Saumitrī, and cut the nose of the sister of Ravana when she made love overtures to Soumatrī, which was the cause of the fight in the Ramayana. Samjaya played a very important part in the Kuru Court. Saumitra killed the invincible son of Ravana, who defeated the king of Heaven Indra and was distinguished by the name Indrajit. The Saumitra chant in the Panchavimsa Brahmana is a wish-granting chant. It runs thus —

“The Gods and the Asuras made a compact that cattle should fall to the share of that of the two (contending) parties, which should vanquish (the other). By

means of the Samjaya (saman) the Gods vanquished the Asuras. Because they had vanquished (the other) (samajayan) therefore, it is the samjaya. The Samjaya (saman) is applied for gaining cattle. (7) There is the Saumitra (saman) (the chant of Sumitra) (8). A (certain) female sacrifice destroying ogre Dirgha Jibi kept her licking at the (butter of the) sacrifices. Indra despaired of slaying her by any stratagem whatever. Now, Sumitra the kutsa was a handsome (young man). To him he (Indra) said — 'Call her to thee'. He called her to him. She said to him — 'This truly is unheard by me, but it is rather pleasant to my heart'. He (Sumitra) came to an understanding with her. At the trysting place they both (Indra and Sumitra) slew her. That forsooth has been at that moment their wish. The Saumitra (saman) is a wish granting chant. Through this (saman) he obtains (the fulfilment of) his wish. (9). (But) an (inauspicious) voice addressed him (Sumitra) thus — 'Doing Sumitra ('good friend') thou hast done a bloody deed'. Grief tormented him, he performed austerities, he saw this Saumitra (saman). Through it he drove away his grief. He who, in lauding has applied the Saumitra (saman) drives away his grief."

These are part and parcel of the Bharata Samhita and Samjaya and Saumitra chants and prove the origin of the Epics from the Vedic hymns, with which the Bharata Samhita was so closely related. The Mahabharata and the Ramayana did not evolve out of the Bharata Samhita and embodied the rationalistic revolution of the later ages. The Bharata Samhita was a book which related the fight between the Devas and Asuras and the Vedic gods acknowledged Narayana as their Father and Creator of the Universe, whereas the Indian Epics describe the feats of the illustrious kings and their priests with incarnations of Narayana in Rama and Krishna, etc. They belong to distinct periods of time and describe the manners, customs and religion of distinct centres.

NARAYANA.

Narayana used to be invoked at the outset of an undertaking and the Indian Epics and Puranas have done it invariably. Even Sankaracharya, the most celebrated exponent of the Adwaita Vedanta, followed the practice in his great commentary on the Shrimad Bhagwad Gita. But it is very unfortunate that the well-known Narayana invocation Sloka has often been misinterpreted and misconstrued, and many great students of the Indian Epics have been misled by it. The commentator Nilkantha, however, is correct, and the great book Srimad Bhagabata very clearly enunciated the true meaning of the invocation Sloka in question *

It is said that the Vedas, the Epics and the Puranas were all handed down by tradition and the Hindus religiously followed them. The Hindus hear from their astrologers very short accounts of their past history from the very Satya-Juga, with the names of gods and great kings they worshipped and the prophecy of the coming events of the New Year, on the New Year's day every year with a religious devotion and faith. This is the best of all traditions and in it the worship of Narayana is declared in the Satya-Juga and no other gods are mentioned. The names of the famous ancient kings of Satya-Juga are Baibasvata Manu, Ikshaku, Bali, Prithu, Mandhata, Pururaba, Dhundhumar and Kartabirjyarjuna.

Time has been divided by Ancient Indian sages into the distinct divisions of Satya, Treta, Dwapara and Kali ages, but having regard to the fact that the Epics and Puranas published accounts of men and events, making kings and sages of Satya and Treta contemporary with those of Dwapara and Kali, one can hardly look upon these divisions as correct and convincing. This may be said also about the different cycles of Manu, and the intelligent Brahmins invented the legend of an untimely deluge "Akahka Prolaya" in the first cycle of time, Swambhuva Manantaraya, in which Kapila, the founder of the Samkhya School of Philosophy flourished.

The great sage Kapila requested his grandfather, Swambhuva Manu, to grant him a region where he could pursue his rationalistic enquiries,

* Narayana is superior to the inexpressible and of the universe has emanated from the inexpressible. All these worlds and the earth of seven islands consist in the embryo of the universe.

but the great progenitor refused him this prayer, saying that he could pursue it anywhere he liked. His great contemporary sages were each connected with a particular school of Vedic learning, but Kapila was unconnected with any, and this is what is sought to be brought out by this legend, and hence Kapila laid Svyambhuva under a curse by which he deluged the world with a flood from which it was finally rescued by Brahma through the assistance of Narayana. This legend probably refers to the evolution of the cult of Narayana worship •

The Kalika Purana, an important book recording all the details of that deluge, describes Kapila as the author of an untimely deluge which submerged the world. The word Akalika (Untimely) Pralaya cannot refer to the natural phenomenon of flood, but refers to the great intellectual ferment which Kapila caused among all classes of men. In fact, his doctrines were so revolutionary that the Brahmins were, at first, at their wits' end to adjust their mode of life with his new philosophy. He stands between the old age of materialism, reflected in the worldliness of sacrifices, and the new school of idealism, which is contemporaneous with the promulgation of the esoteric metaphysics of the Upanishads.

Yet the school of Kapila is Brahmanic. He gave a new definition of the word 'Brahmana', who according to the older view was a mutterer of Vedic hymns and who performed and supervised sacrifices. But the new Brahman is one who has become a part of the Brahma, the supreme soul through the sacrifice of self.

The legend of Kapila throws much light on Narayana worship. Nilkantha, the great commentator of the Mahabharata, bore out the great Kapila's theory in explaining the Narayana invocation Sloka of the Mahabharata and said that the Sloka in question was the composition of Vyasa himself, who incorporated the Bharata Samhita into the Mahabharata.

The god is remembered as Narayana in the beginning of the world; it is compounded of the words—"Nara" and "Ayana"; (The compound word means one who enters into Nara, a name of the Brahmanda, i.e., God, the creator of all.) Nara means—consciousness involved in illusion, i.e., the individual. This Nara is being connoted by the word Narottama as he has the consciousness of an individual superior to the inanimate, Narayana, whose Self as the cause of all is superior to that individual. That supreme consciousness, the true knowledge of the infinite, is Brahma, and is the real Self beyond the universe of this illusioned individual, hence he has been reasonably described with an epithet Narottama. Nara is

intended to denote Brahmanda, whose place of rest and entrance are the all-pervading soul Narayana. Nara, who has been in unison with the human body created by his own illusion, is called Jiba

The word Narottama denotes that he realises the supreme Brahma, 'bowing unflinchingly down to that goddess of speech, Saraswati, who illuminates the true knowledge of the Narottama, Nara and Narayana' and the book styled Jaya or Bharata could vanquish the receding illusory world, making one free from worldly desires. The word Jaya is used in the sense to confer victory in human pursuit of Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha, the ultimate goal of humanity to realise divinity. After bowing down to that Narayana and Nara, that supremely merciful divine speech entered into a book called Jaya for the knowledge of the people. The glory of the son of Parasara, the limit of whose kindness cannot be expressed, lay in his trying to unveil the mystery of the fourteen branches of learning in such a manner as to be accessible to the mediocre and the dullard, with a view to reform their evil inclinations by opening the flood-gates of religious piety through examples from the past history of Indian civilisation.

Nara and Narottama mean that guide of men who can perfect the body and soul together by his own example. The heroes and heroines of the two great Indian Epics, whom the Purana styled with the distinct name of Jaya, illustrate the perfect men and women who were translated to heaven as incarnations of the attributes or limbs of religion if not of God Himself.

Narayana the all-pervading universal soul, however, should not be confounded with the sage Narayana, the composer of the Rig Veda Purusha Sukta (Rv. X, 90), whom the author of the Chronology of Ancient India wrongly alleges to be the son of Nara. The Chaitanya Charitamrita, the greatest philosophical work in Bengali by Kaviraj Krishna Das, the authoritative mouthpiece of the Chaitanya School of Philosophy, describes the real conception of Narayana in a dialogue between Krishna and Brahma.

Brahma says "Art thou not Narayana? I am giving thou the reasons why thou art Narayana. Thou art the soul—the root of all beings in the creations both real and illusory. As earth is the material cause of all earthen wares, so art thou the cause of all beings—in thee does rest everyone. The word 'Nara' means, the sum of all entities and 'Ayana' means that which they dwell in. Hence it follows that thou art the ultimate abode of all (Mula Narayana). This is one aspect of the argument and let me present to thee the other one. The incarnations such as Purusha, etc., are the Lords of beings, but as regards majesty Thou art far superior to them. Hence it follows that Thou art the ultimate Lord and source of all. With Thy power do they protect the worlds. Hence the original Narayana art Thou and none else. Oh my glorious Lord, let me present to thee another aspect of the argument. Infinite is the number of Brahmandas (ब्रह्माण्ड) and Vai

Thou art the witness—consent of the spirit of all the acts that are performed in the eperiods by the inhabitants of these infinite worlds. Is thou president to the worlds exit? None can move or exit, unless it be provided over by Thee. As Thou presideest over the exit of all beings Thou art the supreme Lord (Mula Narayana)."

Krishna argues, "Brahma I do not follow you. That Narayana (whom you speak of) dwells in the ocean like soul of beings."

Brahma replies, "It is true that those Narayanas who live in the ocean like soul of beings are merely Thy parts. The three Narayanas, namely, the one who lies in the ocean of primary causes the other who lies in the ocean of milk and the other who lies in the primal waters created with the help of illusion (मिथ्या) and hence they appertain to it (मिथ्या). These three kinds of dwellers in the waters are cognizant of all hearts and the one who is called Purusha is the soul of the universe. The one who lies in the primal waters is the soul of Hiranagarbha (the golden embryo of the universe). He who lies in the ocean of milk is cognizant of the hearts of individual beings. Illusion however small it may be can be traced in the observance of these three Narayanas, but Krishna who is the fourth in relation to them is entirely bereft of illusion. Here Kaviraj Goswami has borne out his statement by a quotation from Swami Sridhara's commentary on the sixteenth verse beginning with Narayana who is called the fourth of the Srimad Bhagawat (Chpt. 17 Book II) here the Swami has stated in a verse 'The Virat (विरट्) the Hiranyagarbha and the Narayana are the different attributes of the supreme Lord. What is different from those three attributes is His real self. Though those three attribute illusion yet they are not the least influenced by it. They all are above illusion. (Here the author confirms himself by a quotation from the Srimad Bhagawat Chapter II, Book I where Suta is addressing Saunaka and others saying 'Here I see the majesty of the Lord that like the understanding that dwells in Him He is not entangled in the attributes of illusion but always holds His own.) As thou art the ultimate above of those three, what doubt there then can be that Thou art the final Narayana? Narayana of the Parabrahman (superior sphere) whose parts are these three is but a kind of manifestation of Thine. Thou therefore constitute the final Narayana.'

The explanation propounded represents the view-point of the greatest teacher of the age, Chaitanya, who realised the teachings of the great Vyasa and by his own light explained the word "Love" (प्रेम) to his disciples in the easiest method possible. The author of Chaitanya Charitamrita is the well-known interpreter of his views and is universally accepted as an authority on the Chaitanya philosophy.

Unfortunately this Sloka has been utilised to identify Nara and Narayana with Arjuna and Vasu-Deva, respectively, which is not the real meaning. The word "Nara" means the Supreme being from which water is said to have flowed. The word "Narayana" means the supreme being in repose on the hood of Vasuki, the snake-god, in the midst of eternal water. This symbolism is deeply connected with the metaphysical speculations of the Aryans regarding the functions of the active principles of life, the theory of creation and the attributes of divinity. It is in this light that the words are explained in Manu Samhita, Bhagabata and later Puranas (Manu Samhita, 1st Chapter, 10 verse)

The School of Nirada and Vyasa, with the help of which Vedic practices were resuscitated in a desirable form, became the starting point of a compromise between the orthodox and the new school of thought. There cannot be any doubt that this happy synthesis was the philosophical background of the Bharata Samhita. In this connection it will be worthwhile to advert to the fables of the Bharata Samhita on which the giant structure of the Mahabharata was built. The birth of Varyana's carrier (Bahana) Garuda, for wreaking vengeance on Indra, is given in Astika Parva. It is said that Indra laughed at the Balakhilla Rishis when they were collecting Palash branches for the sacrifice of the well-known sage Kasyapa. The story of Gajendra Moksham in the Astika Parva is considered to be the prologue of the great Epic, the Mahabharata. It is the story of Garuda's releasing of the fighting elephant and tortoise, who were two Brahmin brothers in their previous birth and had been converted into these beasts by their mutual curses but could not forget their old quarrel and were continuing it in their present birth too. They were released from their mortal coils, when they could not extricate themselves and thought of God Narayana in their dire distress. In their death struggle the elephant prayed to God Narayana for deliverance and Garuda carried the fighting beasts and ate them up.

The Bala-Khilyas, who were hanging on the branch of a tree with their heads downwards, were carried by Garuda to a place in the Himalayas where they were left unmolested on surer ground. From the legend about them in the Mahabharata it was quite palpable that they were really the objects of ridicule in it, but were eventually provided with a better and respectable place where the gods dwell. It is well-known that the Khilas represented a later stratum of Rigvedic poetry. "The word 'Khilas' means 'supplement'." This name in itself indicates that they were texts which were collected and added to the Samhita only after the latter had already been concluded. Some of them were very early compositions. The eleven Vala-Khilya hymns which are found at the end of Book VIII were supplements of this type. These are the so-called Dana-Sruti or praises of gifts, panegyrics commemorating the liberality of princes towards the priestly singers employed by them. That these Vala-Khilyas were a body of recluses given to much worldliness is borne out by the Bhagavata Purana (3rd Skanda, 12th Chapter) where they are described as one of the four orders of anchorites who retained or stored their food and did not give it up till they got fresh food.

The Astika Parva (Adi Parva, Chapter 45) and Bana Parva (Chapter 95) of the Mahabharata make it clear that Jaratkaru and Astika were no other than Agastya and his son Dridhshyau, alias Illabaha.

The identity of Jaratkaru with Agastya would be evident if the account, in Adī Parva, Chapter 45, of Jaratkaru seeing his ancestors hanging head downwards over a big hole and being exhorted by them to liberate them by marrying and producing a son and his carrying out their wish, and the account, in Bana Parva, Chapter 96, of Agastya seeing his ancestors hanging head downwards over a hole and being exhorted by them to produce a son and his carrying out their wish, are read together, and the identity of Astika too with Illabaha would be further clear if the derivation of the name Illabaha (i.e., carrier of fuels for Vedic sacrificial rites) be compared with that of the name Astika (i.e., believer in Vedic religion and rites) (*vide* Bana Parva, Chapter 99 and Astika Parva, Chapter 15)

En passant, the student of the Epics might profitably also compare the name Illabaha with the name Illa, the progenitor of the Indian kings and the name Illabrita, the place where Illa lived with Buddha, as also with the name Illabila, mother of Kuvera, the deity or demon presiding over wealth.

The place where Lopamudra was married to Agastya was where the rivers, Saraswati and Chamasa, met. Dhaumya describes the Agastya shrine and his hermitage as a shrine of Baruna. Agastya was the famous chastiser of the Asuras against whom the Devas were advised by Narayana to seek his help. The destruction of Eatapi and the invulnerable associates of Britta, the Kalkeyas, was accomplished by Agastya. It was he who drove the enemies of the Aryans from the summit of the Vindhya ranges to Southern India, which is allegorically referred to as his stopping the overgrowth of that mountain over the path of the Sun, and saved the extermination of the Nagas through the ability of his son in the snake sacrifice of Janmejaya. Agastya's great mission of making the Nagas peaceful and civilised was not fulfilled in his life-time, but his son succeeded, and this was allegorically referred to in the stopping of the war of Naga-extermination by Janmejaya in his snake sacrifice undertaken by the Sukra family, who bore a great grudge against the Nagas as referred to in the Astika Parva.

Sumukha, the son of the king of the Nagas, was married to Gunakeshi, the daughter of Indra's charioteer, Matali, and this explains why Indra espoused the cause of the Nagas, his charioteer's relations, when they were threatened with destruction by Janmejaya's snake sacrifice. But the Nagas, in spite of their friendship by the marriage alliance with the charioteer of Indra, could not protect their king Lakshaka, who was about to be drawn into the flames of Janmejaya's

sacrifice, when it was the Narayana worshipper Astika, the son of Agastya, who saved them by asking for a gift from the king in the same way as Bamana, the dwarf Avatar of Narayana, had done for driving Bali from Heaven

From this it will appear that both Kapila and Agastya were followers of the Narayana cult. Agastya's meeting with Rama, the great hero of the Ramayana and his supplying Rama with the weapon with which he ultimately killed Ravana, are very significant, as is also the important part Agastya played in the destruction of the Kalkeya. And it is significant that heroes of the Ramayana and the Mahabharata are all represented as Narayana worshippers.

It is well-known that the Dravidians were the tree and serpent worshippers of India, and when the Aryans came to know them, it was not as enemies or conquerors, but rather as their instructors, and for that the great Agastya was deified as Tamir Muni, whom the Tamil race identify with Canopus, the brighter star in the Southern Heaven. He played a very important part in both the Indian Epics. To him and his disciples the Dravidians owed much. It was Agastya who wrote the first Tamil Grammar, which is now obsolete, but the grammar written by his personal disciple Tholka-painir, is read up to this day by students of Shen Tamil. Agastya's family was thus lost to the Aryabarta, and it is said that the Dravidians form one of the great groups of early peoples of India who were never entirely displaced from their original home in Southern India.

Both the Ramayana and the Mahabharata preached the Narayana cult in preference to the Vedic gods. The invocation Sloka contains reference to Saraswati, the goddess of flowing speech and sacred rivers.

The most beneficent and delectable gifts of Nature in India are rivers, mountains and fertile fields full of food, drink and minerals. The old seers lavished upon their names epithets full of poetic significance. The main rivers with their tributaries flowing down from the icy pinnacles piercing the very heavens fulfil a great function in the economic life of the country, the importance of which one can hardly exaggerate. The rivers of India not only perform the important work of fertilising the soil but they add to it, tearing down mountain sides in their rapid flow and bearing with them loads of earth and debris of rocks, for ultimate deposit on the plains.

The fertile soil of the river plains affords vast potential wealth. Agriculture has been the chief industry in India and the incarnation of God Balaram, Krishna's brother, is represented as carrying a plough.

is the best instrument to establish peace amongst nations fighting for economic solutions, and the heroine of the Ramayana is represented as coming out from the furrow of the agricultural field. Sita was a Vedic character and was subsequently adopted in the Epic. It is said that the Brahman sages taught what they heard from the mouth of God Narayana, who recovered the Veda from the possession of the Asuras after slaying them, and thus the Veda was preached. The traditional seven seers of Ancient India were the advance guards of Indian civilisation and are respected and honoured even now by offerings of water to them as progenitors of the Hindu race and religion.

Like all ancient races the Indo-Aryans were a nomadic tribe and they were patriarchal in their earliest systems of society and government. The chieftain of a clan or the father of a family was at once the warrior and the priest. By degrees the gifted families who learned the Vedas and composed hymns became the guides and instructors of the general public and their chiefs or kings. One whose prayer was successful was called a Brahman and those who chanted the appropriate hymns and offered sacrifices to provide against untoward events were Brahmans. As rains and drought were very important for agriculture, Indra was worshipped as the God of clouds, Agni as the God of fire, Varuna as Dyāvspitar and the encompassing sky and so on. The original Rig Veda contains not only the hymns to those gods, but also the story of a fight between the Devas and the Asuras, between Viswamitra, a representative of the Royal warrior class, and Vasistha, the Aryan sage from whom was descended the reviser of the Bharata Samhita, which formed the nucleus of both the Indian Epics, the Ramayana and the Mahabharata.

The Vedic hymns, handed down through many generations in unbroken succession from mouth to mouth, were respected as the most valuable body of oral traditions in existence. Even now there are Brahmans who can repeat from memory the whole of the Vedic verses which they learnt in their childhood. The destructive climate of India and the constant fights amongst the clans made the human mind the safest repository of these Vedic hymns and they were thus justly considered to have emanated from the mouth of the maker of the world, who resides inside the human frame and is in a way the director and retainer of human knowledge and culture.

The Hindus divided time according to the phases of the moon. The sacred Zend Avesta of the Ancient Persians attributes the final dispersion of the Aryan family to some great natural cataclysm which brought about a disastrous change of climate at the site of their ancient

home. It is said that they advanced upon the road of knowledge and culture through the narrow defiles of the Himalayas and descended upon the northern plains of Hindustan. Philological researches succeeded in lifting the veil and throwing important light upon the habits and customs of the Ancient Indo-Aryan family. They used horses, oxen, dogs, goats, and cows in their domestic and social life and used ploughs, boats and carts. The Rig Veda illumines briefly the religious beliefs, social and family customs of the people. They knew the use of weapons of iron, bow and arrow, and were conversant with the art of weaving. The woman was respected as the founder and propagator of the race.

The Vedic religion in its earliest phase originated in the simple and child-like reverence of the healthy primitive mind of the Aryans for the various manifestations of Natural forces, whom it sought to propitiate and to whom prayers were addressed. These prayers were extemporised at different times and on different occasions by the Vedic sages and uttered in a voice suited to the occasion which gave rise to the hymns. The phonetic modulation was well adapted to the sentiment which the hymn provoked. Fear, admiration, desire and exultation, each has a corresponding natural sound which was reproduced in the utterances of the hymn embodying it. The sounds Udatta, Unudatta, etc., are copied from Nature, and therefore great importance was attached to correct pronunciation.

When the particular objects for which the Vedic hymns were composed, were attained by the composers, they were held in great esteem and evoked a sort of special sanctity. Thus great importance came to be attached also to correct and exact reproductions of these hymns, which were supposed to superinduce results which had attended their first recital. At first, however, as is natural with early beliefs, meditation of the inner meaning of the hymn with closed eyes was practised. But Vedic hymns were not only prayers but contained the accumulated wisdom of the race.

The icy, white-coloured mountain ranges, surrounded by mighty water courses, were the abode of the ancient seers and were described as the white island. They lay unexplored and uncomprehended by the ignorant inhabitants of the plains below, and to them appeared as the abode of the gods, emancipated seers and departed ancestors. Over the wide expanse of the Indian Ocean, the air came laden with moisture. The land around the sea discharged its stored up heat from its breast and drew, by the heavenly mechanism of winds, the life-giving moisture-laden air from the sea. These are what we call the South-West monsoon, the soft humid wind, blowing up from the Indian Ocean and carrying with it the means of livelihood for millions. The

Narada in Svetādwīpa, which is represented in both as being the stronghold of Narayana worship. The identity of themes and the style of narration followed in the Uttarakanda and the Narayana section of the Mahabharata clearly establish the fact that the base of the two Indian Epics is the same, and that the thesis proposed to be propounded by both is the same. One is thus driven to the examination of the substrata of both in order to fix the Uttarakanda as the base of the Epic of the Ramayana, and the Bharata Samhita as that of the Mahabharata.

The Bharata Samhita refers to a very ancient period with accounts of the kings mentioned in the Vedas. The inter-relation between the Uttarakanda and the Bharata Samhita is so close that one is tempted to believe that they might have been identical. The Bharata Samhita has admittedly undergone greater changes and got merged in the Mahabharata, and therefore the legends one comes across in the Bharata Samhita may be more clearly understood as to their synthetic form from their version in Uttarakanda than from the current Mahabharata. The legends which originally constituted the Bharata Samhita have been altered and scattered helter-skelter throughout the vast ocean of the Mahabharata, the Ramayana and the Puranas.

In these days of scientific enquiries and discoveries the intricate question of Godhead is no less interesting.

Narayana is addressed as the universal soul in Vedic literature. There are one hundred and eight authoritative Upanishads, which were enumerated as Garbho and Rama Upanishads in the discourses between Rama and his devotee Hanuman. Likewise, there are two Narayana Upanishads, one being thirteen times greater than the other. The smaller one contains quotations from all the four Vedic Upanishads, proving that everywhere Narayana is held to be the Universal soul. All the gods emanate from Him, including the twelve Adityas, eleven Rudras and eight Basus. All the Vedas sprang from Him and enter into Him. This is the essence of the Rig Vedic Upanishads. Narayana is eternal, who is within and without, in all directions, spotless, desireless, actionless, beautiful and single, having no one beside Himself. He who knows Him becomes Vishnu. May good be to all ! The Sama-Vedic Upanishad follows thus —

"Om" first, "namas" next and then Narayana, which altogether make eight vowels—(A U Ma=‘OM’ two, ‘Namas’ two and 5 in the last). One who mounds this eight-voweled address lives upto his maximum age of longevity, pure in speech, becomes the lord of beings (Prajapati), the possessor of wealth, the owner of cows and finally attains immortality."

The last is from the Atharva Vedic Upanishads —

"The essence of Pranava consist in letters ‘A’, ‘U’, and ‘M’ which is Brahma, all blessedness, the ultimate existence and the real self of all beings, by uttering which

the Yogis get emancipated from the worldly bondage of births and deaths, the cause of all worldly desires. He who practises the incantation, goes to Baikuntha. I bow down to Narayana who is represented in 'OM'.

"The white cloud of direct self-knowledge has the lustre of lightning, favourable to it is the lotus eyed (Pundarikaksha) and the unfalling Vishnu, the destroyer of Madhu, son of Deyaki. Narayana is omnipresent in all beings, himself being one. He is not the cause himself but is the receptacle of causes. He is the ultimate reality denoted by 'OM'."

The Vedas were learnt, practised and correctly interpreted at the sacrifices, and when Narayana rescued the Veda from Madhu and Kaitabha, He was given the name of Hayagriva. It is quite natural that when the horse was esteemed as the most valuable of all possessions, people naturally invested it with divine attributes. The sun was represented in the horse and the sacrificers sat facing the direction in which the sun rose every day. The horse sacrifice became the greatest of all sacrifices, wherein the great God Narayana was worshipped from time immemorial.

In this world of flux and motion, where birth and death are mere passing phenomena, what could give man a sure feeling of eternity?

God is revealed to man when he proceeds to the enquiry of the *raison d'être* as to who has created him, for what purpose and what will be his end? These thoughts lead him to the conception and realisation of God-head. He discovers in Nature melodies from the murmuring of streams, the rustling of leaves, the sweet songs of birds and the humming of bees. He imitates the melodies of nature and composes hymns and poems embodied in the sounds of Udatta, Unudatta and Svarita. They represent sound which comes from the nasal, the throat, the brain, and woven in a harmonious form by the last, viz., the Pratitha. 'OM' is the holiest of words in Vedic literature, because it is a combination of 'A', 'U' and 'M', and which, if properly pronounced by a person, causes an inner enlightenment in his brain cells and transports him into a state of exultation in which he sees the reflection of the inner light which is visualised in the God-head. Gayatri or Savitri, the mother of Veda, consisting of 24 words, has the same esoteric and mystical significance. Thus when the Omnipotent Father is invoked through the sincere and feeling Vedic hymns, the devotee wants not only to secure his favours through them, but also tries to realise that the gods above have accepted the offerings made in the sacrifices.

With the progress of time these sacrifices became very popular religious and educational institutions, in which kings and sages acquired fame as patrons and instructors of learning and religion, a sacrifice soon came to have a very great political and spiri-

science. Efficient performers and initiators of these sacrifices became revered sages, thought capable of conferring boons on kings and to expiate their accumulated sins. They soon came to be distinguished by the titles of Maharshi, Brahmarshi and Debarshi, and kings and people paid them homage. Their words became laws, their blessings were eagerly sought to ensure success and victory and their curses were dreaded. They preached the supremacy of the same God Narayana over the Vedic gods. The origin of religion may be traced to the natural fear of death, to which man in his ignorance is subjected. It came to be generally believed that by good conduct, and religious observances and rites, he could attain prosperity and renown in the present world and heaven hereafter. He realised that the inner man, i.e., the soul, is eternal, and that spiritual bliss can only be attained through the consciousness of the Paramatman, as it alone can confer on him eternal bliss. He can then face the world without fear, overcome sorrow and grief calmly and enjoy peace of mind even in the midst of the direst calamity, privation and misery. This is the cardinal doctrine on which the Vedas grew or were bifurcated from the one Veda.

God speaks in the books of religion of all nations. In the Bible the Almighty like the sound of many waters, spoke in clear and piercing tones above the stormy tumults and the people at the foot of the mountain heard His voice in fear and trembling. This fear of God is the beginning of wisdom. Fear itself is inherent in childhood. It tends to keep one out of danger. A child loves its mother, and fears to offend her or to disobey her wishes. Parents create a certain amount of fear in their children in order to save them from being foolhardy. The thunder and lightning, the ocean and tempest, create in man a certain amount of fear, and he prays to God to save his life. The fear of death subjects mankind to a sort of bondage. There is a wholesome fear of God which prevents a man from doing wrong lest it displease the great God. Pushed to extremes, this fear led many people to sacrifice whatever they considered dear to them and they even used to inflict corporal punishments on themselves, wounding their own persons, to appease the wrath of the Almighty Father. It induced reverence and kept one from undue familiarity with the divine God and from presumption on God's mercy.

The Divine minstrel Narada claims the first place in the Hindu world of religion by reason of his unprecedented devotion and religious fervour and austerity as the accredited messenger of heaven. It is he who sang to the accompaniment of his lyre the praise of God, which Vedic sages used to do before him by the three different sounds called Udatta, Unudatta and Svarita. Chanting of Vedic hymns was very

difficult and it took 12 years to complete the course of study (*Vide* Manu Chapter 3 1)

The 12 years sacrifice of the great teacher Saunaka at the sacred Naimisharanya represents the ancient Hindu University, where the pupils saw how their teachers performed the sacrifices and, impressed with their religious fervour, learnt the difficult pronunciations of Vedic hymns from practical lessons. It was there that the scriptures of the Hindu religion were drawn up in consultation with the great teachers under the name of the great man who divided the Vedas for the convenience of his pupils and the performers of religious ceremonies and sacrifices, and who was distinguished by the name of Vyasa (which means divider). So great was the influence of the name Vyasa that all the Hindu books of religion were ascribed to him and were said to have been composed in the great university of Saunaka, who was the great Vedic scholar and grammarian and the first indexer of the Vedas and became very celebrated. Eventually the site of the great university of Saunaka at Naimisharanya Forest, became the shrine of the Hindus and there are many traditions about the origin of its name.

All the places where Vedic ceremonies were performed came to be named after their distinguished performers. The names of Naimisharanya and Kurukshetra owed their origin to the names of the kings of the Royal family, Nimi and Kuru, and the place at the confluence of the three sacred rivers of the Hindus where very many sacrifices were performed, became distinguished by the name of Prayag (Allahabad). The source of all the important Indian rivers is the sacred mountains of the Himalayas, which are always covered with snow, and the sun shining on the melting snow made them appear like an island of a white colour and they were described as the Swetadwipa, the abode of the great Creator, Narayana. The Vedic gods could not continue to hold their own with the progress of time. The early Hindu religion sprang from the love and reverence towards parents, dead or living. The few gods who came to be regarded as such were those presiding over nature and natural phenomena. The law of universal obligation was transformed into the law of God. The man who observed that law of God developed a god-like character and was thought to be the means of God's revelation to man. Such a man was Narada, and Vyasa was his pupil. The inspired visions of ages continued to be ascribed to one man Veda Vyasa. Belief and trust in one God and one teacher, who became so famous, helped materially to elevate the life of a nation and to transform the sinful into healthy and holy characters.

The Bharata Samhita was conceived by the Vedic sage known as Narayana, and the divine minstrel Narada, who sang hymns in Vedic

metre and language in praise of that superman who conceived the idea of creation and laid down rules of preservation and destruction and their inter-relation in the system of creation and resurrection. All men were created equals and they were endowed by the great Creator with certain inalienable fundamental rights. To secure the growth and fulfilment of these rights, society was founded and rules were laid down by the elders, who derived their power from the passive obedience of the people to them. This was the state of things in the pre-university days depicted in the Paushya Parva of the Mahabharata. In the Poulama Parva the family life of the great teachers of the day was depicted and in the Astika Parva, their influence with the kings and the great Vedic god Indra was shown.

The kings and priests were ideals of ancient Hindu religion and morality and they were no respecters of persons or deities, however great, but taught the way of God in truth. At the high altar of the Hindu sacrifices, sermons were elucidated by examples and oral traditions, and statutes were promulgated to create good fellowship between all men with an eye to the public weal. The essence of ancient civilisation seemed to have been to practise proper restraint in all spheres of life in order to prevent any sort of encroachment upon the rights of others. Four social orders or caste systems were evolved when the conflicting interests of various classes clashed with one another, distinctly assigning different functions to each of them according to their ability, learning and culture, and not according to birth alone. It was a time to which the well-known line fittingly applied

“Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar’s and to God the things that are God’s, and they marvelled at Him.”

The Hindu teachers and expounders of truth had not to experience the cruel fates of Jeremiah in being thrown into an Egyptian pit, Daniel into the den of lions, Saul of Tarsus in getting thirty nine bleeding stripes, Wycliffe and Hurs in being burnt at the stake, Socrates drinking hemlock while discoursing on the immortality of the soul, or of Jesus in being crucified for the joy of living and dying for a great cause. The Christians extol this as the greatest gift to mankind, to realise a kingdom of love, given in love, and given for love, but the Hindus have a different angle of vision which is directed towards the abstract Narayana, not a Vedic god.

The standards had been changing with the progress of time. In the old days bad things were easily concealed and there was hardly any standard worth the name. It never troubled society and the respecter of morality to provide any decent law to put a stop to such a state of

thing. There was no possibility of one God, one religion and one law for all. The growth of society, nobility and race propagation entirely depended on the great question of the sex problem and their inter-relations. The sanctity of marriage required to be respected for (i) the growth of population, (ii) the regulation of passion, (iii) the leading of society and (iv) the obtaining from any marriage at variance with the prevailing standard of culture.

The Rig Veda the oldest of all the Vedas, whose composer was a sage clothed with the name of Narayana, singing the sacred hymn of the origin of the universe, creation, etc., the four social orders of mankind spring from the body of the great Creator. Patriarch, Prophets and Kings of Ancient India looked their eye upon Him as the deliverer of mankind.

A tree is born by its fruit and a man is remembered by his deeds, either as a sinner or as a god. It is with the sacred waters of a river, a sea, or a sacred prayer that religious baptism has been performed from time immemorial and, as such, rivers became sacred in the eyes of religion and men.

The whole human race sprang from one family. The Christian Bible says that God "Hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the Earth, and hath determined their habitation." What the human being is can be no more than an animal. There is nothing more than a physical body. The real man is reflected in his knowledge, perception, will, personality, reason and conscience. All these were summed up in what was called the *nature*, and that the real man. By first birth man inherits the divine nature from above and from within. The cultural birth is the real birth and it is called the second birth by the Hindus. The idea of rebirth is the essence of all cultural notions of the world. Christian Scripture bears out the basis of Hindu religion —

The apostle is made apt of believing God, the Holy Spirit has begotten a new life in your heart. You are as a child born into the family of God and He loves you as He loves His son.

Herein lies the greatness of man and his superiority over beasts. It is really and truly God's creation which one can feel and see and not the external world with which the first man praised the Creator, the Almighty Father. Give your free to God and He will put His shine upon it. Every Saint has been born into the family of God by a miraculous conception. As the soul responds to His manifold overtures of love and goodness in Nature and yields unquestioning obedience to His revealed will, there is established in the human heart an eternally settled assurance of the existence of God.

To eliminate God from one's life because one cannot comprehend Him and His ways, is the most tragic mistake one can commit. One does not understand all about electricity, yet one avails oneself of its light, warmth and power. God is infinite, in Him are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge and man may be ever searching and learning, but he cannot think of exhausting His resources, His wisdom, His goodness and His power. Make your religion lovely if you are really in love with it. One is happy in proportion to being kind and sympathetic and not being selfish.

The creation of heaven and earth opens the first chapter of every Book of Religion and so it is with the Bhārata Sāmhita from which the two great Indian Epics grow. Those who work to make others happy are the happiest men in the world, and those who are seeking happiness for themselves are the most dissatisfied people and do all sorts of wrongs. It is in the heart that the true singing has its habitation, which is called the universal singing of mankind. The new birth means a new man. Count Tolstoy said that the best music was called the speech of Heaven and Angels.

The whole range of the external and internal life of a man is divided into two parts, viz. the Kriya Kānda (life of action) and Jnana Kānda (life of knowledge), closely connected with this view is the relationship between Atma and Paramatma. Activity is an essential attribute of the Atma associated with Prakṛti—the inner force of enjoyment and energy—is the consciousness from which knowledge and wisdom are sprung is the means of approaching Paramatma. Atman and Paramatman are distinct entities. Atma is enclosed in an animal frame, but Paramatma is all-pervading consciousness. It is through faith and knowledge that man realises his existence in Atman. It is through adversity that the craving of man is turned towards higher consciousness. Sorrow and sufferings, pleasure and pain do not lead to the bliss which can only be realised by the human soul in its endeavour to approach Paramatma, with whom it is seeking communion.

Philosophy is the secret milk of adversity. And sweet are the uses of adversity which like a toad ugly and reckoning, wears yet a precious jewel on its head" (Shakespeare)

As a student, the young Aryan had to pass through a strenuous period of study. It was a period of activity during which he learnt by heart, like a parrot, how to chant the Vedic hymns with proper pronunciation. He was not taught their meaning at this stage. He was compared to a "Tittiri" or partridge. It was at the sacrifice where, after the completion of his instruction, he took part as a priest, that he became

acquainted with the esoteric meaning of the hymns which were chanted on these occasions. He derived not only knowledge but also faith when the boons wished for by the offerer of the sacrifice were granted, and this was further fortified by the miracles or strange events that sometimes happened at a sacrifice. The sacrifice therefore was to him, and to the whole community which participated in it, a great act in which knowledge and faith were gained in addition to the manifold material blessings which flowed from them. It was the sacrifice, with its various emblems, and their proper understanding, which further led to the metaphysical speculations about Atma and Paramatma that lie in the background of the present Mahabharata. The current Mahabharata begins with the Pausya Parva, which describes the student life in monasteries. These students were the well-known Vedic hymn composers and were successful in reaching the goal through Narayana worship. It is followed by Poulama and Astika Parvas.

In the Paushya Parva (in the Adiparva), which has been in its main outline and in some of the necessary details eliminated in the first version, but in a later version retold in the Aswamedha Parva with full detail, one gets an echo of this conflict, between the Brahmins and the Kshatriyas. The king of Paushya of the earlier version is king Saudasa of the later one. His name occurs in the geneological lists in the Mahabharata, the Puranas and the Ramayana. He is the King of Ajodhya, the seat of power of the Solar dynasty. He had been cursed by the Brahmins to become a Rakshasha (demon). To him the Sage Utanka came for the Kundala which belonged to his queen. This Kundala possessed the property of the touchstone of the fables. The queen had doubted as to whether the king had really sent the Brahmin to her for the magic ornament and sent him back to the king to bring a token from the king. The king complained to him that in spite of the many favours which the Kshatriyas showered on the Brahmins, the latter treated them with harshness and cruelty, and reduced them to a wretched plight. He charged Utanka to communicate this to the queen, who understood this to be a sort of token from the king expressing a desire on the part of the king that she should give her valuable ornament to the Brahmin. In this story of Utanka it is clearly brought out that the sage Utanka, who was a worshipper of Rudra (Mahadeva) and was about to pronounce a curse on Krishna, became at once converted into a worshipper of Narayana.

The above is not the only instance of the bitter strife that was going on between the Brahmins and Kshatriyas. It led to the weakening of both these castes and the consequent rise of the non-Aryans to power. The danger of the submergence of Aryan culture under non-Aryan

domination became patent to all. Hence the sacrifices were reformed and made all-embracing, and the *Bharata Samhita* was composed as a means to inaugurate a period of peace and intercaste harmony by recital of stories on the occasions when the sacrifices were performed. These were strung together as a compendious whole and became the foundation of the mighty structure on which the present *Mahabharata* was raised.

The *Poulama Parva* begins with a legend connected with the Fire god. It speaks of the social marriage union solemnised before the fire, which has a spiritual bearing and meaning. In this legend *Bhrigu* cursed the Fire god for showing some partiality to the demon *Puloma*, when the latter had abducted *Puloma*, the wife of *Bhrigu*, after referring the matter to the arbitration of the Fire god. In the said arbitration the Fire god, having been placed in a quandary, had declared the truth that one who had first wooed might have some sort of preference over one who subsequently married. It refers to an early loose system of marriage which obtained among the Indo-Aryans and which was sought to be reformed by the Vedic sage *Swetaketu Bhrigu*, who became furious, laid a curse on the Fire god that everything he touched would be destroyed. But the fire being the medium through which all the other gods received the offerings made to them by their devotees on earth the great gods were interested in this matter and interceded. The curse was accordingly modified to suit the requirements of the gods and of the mortals, who have to cook their food with it.

It cannot be overlooked that in the previous *Parva*, fire is worshipped in the form of a horse, and this is a very early belief. The connection between the two *Parvas* is very clear. The fire which *Utanka* blew from the back of the horse was a destructive fire with which he frightened the snake king *Takshaka* to restore him the *Kundalas*, which the snake king had stolen from him. The legend of *Utanka* contains reference to the non-sacrificial fire, but perhaps implies Vedic sacrificial rites. The fire *Utanka* blew from the back of the horse though non-sacrificial is shown to be productive of the same result. This fire as well as *Janmejaya's* sacrificial fire engendered mortal dread in *Takshaka*, king of the Nagas.

The dissertation on *Atma* and *Paramatma* in the guise of two women in the story is also characteristic of the *Mahabharata*. The Epic is distinguished from similar literary productions by the importance it attaches to spiritual questions, *e.g.* on soul and on God and the way to attain god-head. Furthermore, the legend of *Utanka* in its general as well as in its special features is characteristic of the very spirit of the *Bharata Samhita* and is considered so important that a section is

devoted to it in Asvamedha Parva, in which the story is retold, and an Anugita is attached to it

The cruel sacrifices became abhorrent in the later period of the Vedic age. With the growth and predominance of Narayana worship, sacrifices with slaughter of animals were stopped. And it is significant that the great king Uparichara, who was an ardent worshipper of Narayana, performed even his Asvamedha sacrifice with offerings of forest products only and without the horse or any animal sacrifice whatsoever, (Santi Parva, Chapter 337). Thus the sacrifices were humanised and, as has been said before, they served a very important cultural purpose. The Yajna now began to be clearly explained to the public who gathered to witness its performance. The various rituals connected with it and their symbolical meaning were explained. Furthermore, instructions on superstitious practices and child welfare were imparted to the people through parables which were narrated to them from day to day by the priest, and these are preserved in the Markendeya Section of the Bana Parva, which is a complete book explaining all the rituals connected with Yajna.

There is no doubt that sacrifices conserved the traditions and the culture of the people, which came to be closely interwoven with offerings which were made to the various gods and goddesses through fire. The legend of the Fire god was so developed that it absorbed various current forms of popular worship, and from this point of view the sacrifices of a later age marked a stage in the transition from the earlier form of Vedic worship to the later phase of Narayana worship, which held a very strong sway over the people. The Markendeya Section, which clearly adumbrates the outlines of this change and which is not only explanatory of the many important questions raised in the Adiparva, in connection with the snake sacrifice held by Janméjaya, but confirmatory of many of the themes treated therein, is an important section of the Bharata Samhita.

The central theme of the Markendeya section is the birth of Kartikeya, the War god. He is shewn to be the son of the Fire god by Svaha. All the women who had become interested in, and compromised by the birth of this prodigy were transformed into various evil forces which cause early death to children. The offspring to the War god himself were also described as malignant influences which cause harm to the seed during pregnancy. These evil forces, which haunt men up to the 70th year of their life, had to be propitiated in the sacrifice by means of suitable offerings. The wife of Kartikeya was Deva Sena, who is worshipped in the form of Shasthi and Lakshmi by men, and she is

represented as a benign deity. The entire mythology connected with the Fire god covered schemes of child and maternal welfare based on sorcery and witchcraft of a superstitious age. The reason why one is inclined in favour of an early date for the Markendeya section, and the opinion is in substantial agreement with Professor Oldenberg, is that it interprets the useful nature of sacrifices and furnishes unmistakable evidence of the connection between the sacrifice and the liturgy of Atharva Veda, and secondly that it is linked up with the relevant portions of Adiparva bearing upon snake sacrifice.

Sarama (cf. Sans. Sarameya = Dog), the bitch mother of dogs, which cursed Janmejaya, is represented as a malignant animal which in the shape of Sarama steals away the phœtus from the uterus of women. Kadru, the mother of the snakes, enters it and eats the phœtus. Binata is represented as the vulture and Putana a fearful and terrible Rakshasi of a hideous form causing abortion. There is no doubt that these were popular superstitions current among the people, by which they tried to explain many physiological phenomena connected with childbirth and child welfare, and that in the great sacrifices provisions were made for removing and undoing these evil influences. The story telling by the priest provided teachings on these heads. Kadru, the Rakshasis and Gandharvas were invoked and these were forms of exorcism which were practised at the sacrifices. For this reason, the composition of the Markendeya section of Bana Parva must be assigned to a very early period and it should be regarded as an important portion of the Bharata Samhita.

The fact that when the big sacrifices which were performed by powerful kings went out of vogue, religious worship connected with child welfare and practices which were of the nature of exorcism survived, show the extent, measure and strength of popular belief. Manasa, the goddess of snakes, is even now worshipped with great fervour on the day of Dasahra, and offerings are made to Shasthi, the presiding deity of the children, and she is propitiated by means of special puja and offerings on the sixth day of childbirth. The vestiges of ancient worship still linger in the worship of tree, fish, snake-deity Manasa, Durga, Sarasvati, Kartick, Siva, Krishna, etc., on particular days of the year in orthodox Hindu homes. The influence of the philosophic God Narayana had become so great that even Moslems who settled in India offered him flour and milk and the God was regarded by them as a Pir who gave success to his followers. The form of worship by offering of Sanni to him on the full moon day and the last day of the month is still very widely prevalent in India. The God is called Satya Narayana or the real Narayana of truth.

The early Aryans were not barbarian beasts to fly away from or lie stupefied and dumb with fear before fire or other terrific scourges of Nature, but they prayed to be saved from them. Growth of knowledge, however, ran parallel to the cravings of the primitive mind. The real higher education of a community could only begin after their elementary needs were provided for. Man is exposed to physical and supernatural fears. He seeks protection against them by the construction of his quarters on hills, in dales or in river valleys. The natural phenomenon of a powerful person forcing his authority on the rest of the community led men to think of a Supreme God who rules over all. This God was invoked in hymns. Family life evolved out of the social need of conserving the race and perpetuating creeds and traditions. This gave rise to ancestor-worship. The authority which was exercised in a patriarchal society by the *pater familias* was the foundation of ancestor-worship. The deceased ancestors began to be worshipped and this was the first stage in the evolution of religion. Then came nature-worship, and the two together constituted the first step in the attainment of knowledge.

The close connection between religion and social needs cannot be too strongly emphasised. The mythology of the early Indo-Aryans shows that their tradition goes back to a period anterior to the discovery of the art of agriculture as a means of sustaining life. The mythology of the boar incarnation of Narayana relates to the realisation of tillage being one of the best means of raising corn from the land. The Aryan Rishis noticed that when the earth was turned by the boar with its tusk, the seed which fell on it germinated more quickly than when it fell on soil which had not been treated in the same way. This is what occurs in the hymn of Sita in the Rig Veda. The Sita of the Ramayana is reminiscent of the Sita of the Rig Veda in that she is stated in the former to have sprung from the earth when it was furrowed with the plough by king Janaka of Mithila. The story may contain a great historical truth, namely, that agriculture by means of ploughs might have been first introduced among the Videhas and then the system might have spread to Ayodhya, and this perhaps explains the wide popularity of the legend of Rama and Sita. The Kings of Mithila were renowned for their wisdom and knowledge, and it was the special feature of the court of Janaka, and this was perhaps largely due to the introduction of a rational system of husbandry which contributed not a little to an outburst of cultural activity at Mithila, the capital of the Videhas.

The Indian Epics do not belong to the Vedic, Upanishad, Sutra or Puranic periods. It was an age in which many complex practices and systems of belief existed. Creation was identified with Brahma, the

Universal Soul, and everything was believed to have emanated from Him. The idea of Brahma omnipresent in the immobile and mobile is found in the death of Hiranyakasipu. The love and faith of his son Prahlada brought forth the great Nrsinghadev even from the inanimate pillar broken by the Asura, Hiranyakasipu. The great lion-man god of tremendous power and roar terrified the Asura and the world. The ancients in shaping the gods clothed them with supernatural attributes to infuse awe and terror in the minds of infidels. It was for this purpose that animal-headed supernatural beings were depicted in the cave drawings and in Pauranic mythology. The Epics demonstrate the process of evolution from great men to great supernatural beings and deities, viz., Nara and Narayana, Rama, Parasurama, Sri Krishna, Balarama and Kapila. The Pandavas and similar persons were made demi-gods. The Upanishads declare there is nothing but one self-existent spirit, the mute Brahma, and all else is illusion or Maya. In the Pauranic age the theory of Karma came into prominence above all. An evil follows a man even after death and through many transmigrations.

Birth in a high caste family or a low caste family was thought to be the immediate effect of works in the previous life. The theory of evolution of action was then materialised in the idea of God. Krishna was a great reformer against this Pauranic system of fatalism, or belief in the effects of a previous life's works. The Ramayana, Book VII, gives the story of transmigration of a Brahmin worshipper of Siva in a Benares temple. He was a Kulapati, to which family Sounaka belonged as stated in the Poulama Parva of the Mahabharata. The Epics abound in instances of re-births in the higher or lower orders of animal life, according to works in previous lives, e.g., the story of the mother of the bitch in the Pousya Parva cursing King Janmejaya that the object of the snake sacrifice would not be fulfilled, the story of the dog complaining to Rama and praying for the punishment of a Brahmin who had beaten it for no fault and who had been exalted to the rank of a Kulapati by mere good fortune, and the story of King Nahusa being transformed into a snake. Here idol worship and enjoyment of place, position and wealth are denounced as sure means of one's ultimate degradation and ruin.

In sacrifices Angira, Atharva, Bhrigu were invoked as representing the spirits of the dead and they were said to be propitiated when they were thought to be drinking the Soma-Rasa offered to them*. In Brihadaranyaka Upanishad as well as in Rig Veda Yajnavalkya, in answer to Bidagdha, Sakalya mentioned one Biswa Deva and the Fire was addressed as the great power of the 33 deities and

as representing Baiun, Mitra and Indra. The Moon represents the objects of Sense and the Sun the 'Ego' or the conscious-self. All these ultimately centred in Brahma, eventually the self-differentiating Unity or Souparna as is mentioned in the Rig Veda* and the Bharata Samhita. The poets and wise men ascribed divinity to various human beings. This is how the Pauranics ascribed divinity to seven Rishis in the different cycles or Mannantaras until the idea of Avatara (incarnation of God) intervened. These Avatars are ten in number, viz., (1) Matsya, (2) Kurma, (3) Baraha, (4) Nrisingha, (5) Baman, (6) Parasurama, (7) Rama, (8) Krishna, (9) Balarama and (10) Buddha. Another Avatar, *eg.*, Kalki', is expected to come at the end.

The deeds of Rama and Krishna form the subjects of the Indian Epics. Buddha was a great religious conception of God who stood against sacerdotal tyranny and caste system, and preached universal love and charity as a better means of getting rid of the evils of passion and selfishness than by waging war. He enjoined that the greatest principle of religion consisted in non-destruction of animal life. At the time when Buddha flourished in India, Pythagoras, Zoroaster, and Confucius appeared in other parts of the world. That was an epoch-making age. Wise and virtuous kings and religious apostles and philosophers were the real milestones in the great march of time and were truly the makers of cycles of age or Mannantaras. All sacred books and traditions yielded to them and they became the makers of men and gods, heaven and hell, virtue and vice, and good and evil.

However, it will be seen that Narayana is not one of the ten Avatars, but was the Epic conception of the ideal God-head, distinct from that of the Veda. The sages saw the great powers of the elements, the beneficent works of the sun and the moon, and conceived the true idea of one Lord presiding over all. They saw the beneficent services of the rivers providing them with drink and fishes, watering the trees and fields to give them fruits, flowers and grain. They witnessed the falling of the rivers into the limitless sea with the sky mingling with it and its thundering billows and the invigorating and bracing air on the shores. The majestic appearance and disappearance of the Sun and the Moon with the stars around created an idea of the majesty of God, the great Creator of the universe. The ancient seers and patriarchs were convinced that they were too weak and powerless before these powerful agencies of God. They saw in them the spirit of God and invoked them with prayers, offerings and libations to propitiate Him.

* (10 114, 5)

The phenomena of the Sun and the Moon, the one as the source of energy in the creation being justly regarded as its Prana (or vitality), and the other as superinducing and embalming sleep, the one as the source of all activity and the other embodying the principle of passivity or rest, and silently causing the rotation of lunar phases and ebb and tide, were connected by the early Indo-Aryans with the two forms of worship, the deity and ancestor worship. Kings who were worshippers of the Sun and the Moon were respectively distinguished as the lineal descendants of either. The Bharata Samhita clearly put forward the view that the Devayajna and the Pitriyajna were not conflicting but were inter-related and the popular misconception was dispelled by the story of a conflict between Rudra and Narayana, Gods respectively of destruction and preservation, ending in peace and in the establishment of the true path of piety (Dharmayajna) and this has been clearly elucidated in Manu Samhita —

"The fire offering to be made in Sraddha must not be made in any other fire than that in which Vedic and Smarta rites are performed. A Brahmana keeper of the sacred fire must not offer a Sraddha on any other day in the dark fortnight except on the day of the new Moon.

"The foremost of Brahmanas obtains the same merit by offering libations of water to the manes after his bath as is acquired by instituting the Pitriyajnas (i.e., Sraddhas, lit. sacrifices offered to the manes).

"The Ishhis call the hierarchy of father as Vasus, the (hierarchy of) grand fathers as Rudras and the (hierarchy of) great grand fathers as Adityas.

"Every day, eat the residue of cooked food left after first feeding the Brahmanas (Vishvasa), eat, every day ambrosia. The first is called Vishvasa the second is the residue of food left after performing a sacrifice there with.

"Even the eternal Brahma has acknowledged the divinity of the manes. Thus I have told you all about the mode of performing the five daily sacrifices, and all rites in connection therewith. Now hear me describe the means by which the twice born ones shall earn their livelihood."

The Bharata Samhita records the incident of the conflict between Rudra and Narayana. The place where it occurred has been identified with the Ashrama (hermitage) of Kapila (Vide Vana Parva, Chapter 114). It became invested with sanctity and became a place of pilgrimage. Yudhisthira who visited the place was advised to offer prayer to Varuna before immersing himself in the waters at the confluence of the Ganges and the Sagar (sea). This prayer is significant for elucidating the mutual relations among the Vedic gods discussed before. Thus it became a place of great sanctity. Formerly great merit was acquired by visiting places in which great incidents had taken place.

The region where Kapila lived and which had witnessed a struggle* between Rudra and Narayana became sacred to the Aryans, and pilgrimages were undertaken to this place. The Ashrama (hermitage)

[illegible]

The cult of the gods of the air is illustrated by the legends in the Epics, and if we can trace the origin of the deities which they will be found to be the personification of the elements of the air. The chief legend which centres round the god of the air is that of the ancient, the most important natural phenomena were the battle between the ocean below and the vast sky above, connected by lightning, thunder and rain. The earliest legends connected with the former concerned with the calming of the ocean and referred to the difference between the Devas and Asuras arising over the distribution of the waters recovered therefrom, and the other connected with the latter, related to the fight between Indra and the Asura Vritra, who typified the cloud. The former class symbolised the conflict for knowledge and related to the Veda (Book of Knowledge) was stolen by the Devas; Madhu and Kaitava who Narayana recovered it from them and how the earth grew from the flesh of the vast bodies of demons slain. The Veda or Vedic lore is called Saraswati or Vedabati in the Veda and in its interpretations in the Indian Epics. Sita of the Veda and the Ramayana is identified with Vedabati or Vedic lore in the Mahabharata in the discourse between Hanuman and Bhima —

"Rama recovered his wife like the lost Vedic lore"•

The Uttaraṇḍa Rāmāyaṇa says that Sita was called in the previous life Vedabati, daughter of sage Kuśadvāpa, the son of Bṛhaspati, who

*Yibh Bana Parva, Chapter CLXVIII, verso 9)

observed religious austerities for having Narayana as her husband. She sacrificed her life when Ravana stood in her way*. The story of the stealing of Vedic lore and the recovery thereof was developed in the Ramayana in the well-known episode—the carrying away of Sita by the demon Ravana in the absence of Rama and her recovery by Rama, an incarnation of Narayana†, after killing the powerful wicked Ravana bear ample testimony. The latter class of legends symbolises the fight for subjugating and utilising the forces of Nature and relate how Indra, who was a worshipper of Pasupati tried to conquer the Demon Brhta, who was a worshipper of Narayana, by his thunder-bolt i.e., by sheer force, but failed, how Indra thereupon became converted into a worshipper of Narayana and got the advice of Narayana, the God of truth and knowledge, to conquer Brhta with the help of the bone of the anti-Narayanite sage Dadhichi and how Indra in that way succeeded in killing Brhta. This represented the transformation of the obstructing disturbing and evil clouds into beneficent rain with the help of knowledge in science for the good of mankind, and this legend in the Bharata Samhita is developed full-fledged in both the Epics.

The central theme of all the legends in the Bharata Samhita was the supremacy and predominance of Narayana worship. The legend of Gajendramoक्षण in Adī Parva is considered to be the prologue of the Mahabharata. In this legend of the huge bird, Garuda was represented as the most powerful being bearing as it does, Narayana, the Supreme Being or Paramatma, on its wings and fighting with Indra for the nectar and defeating him. The defeat of Indra, a Vedic god, at the hands of Garuda, the carrier of Narayana, is a fitting illustration of the Joya or triumph of Narayana worship over the Vedic forms of worship, e.g., of Indra, Rudra, etc.‡. Pasupati or Siva was the god of the materialistic world, and the bull-borne Indra (Adī Parva), who was at first a follower of Pasupati, represented the king of the materialistic world. The defeat of Indra at the hands of Garuda in a manner symbolises the defeat of the materialistic Pasupati cult before the spiritualistic Narayana cult. This is what Joya in the invocation verse means.

The culminating point in the ascendancy of the Narayana cult is perhaps sought to be visualised when even Sukra, the high priest of the Pasupati worshippers Asuras and Demons, took to preaching and inculcating the excellence of Narayana worship to the Demon king Brhta§, and when Bhṛigu, an arch-apostle of the Pasupati cult and who had tried Narayana, became converted to an ardent Narayana

* Ramayana Book VII, Canto 17

† U Ramayana Book I, Canto- 15 and 16

‡ Astik Parva

§ Mbh Shanti Parva, Chapters 279 and 280

worshipper*. Bhṛigu's feet became the emblem of Narayan worshippers

From the foregoing legends of Narayana being the rescuer and propagator of the Vedic lore, and the Vedic lore being named Saraswati in the Vedas, Vedabati or Sita in the Ramayana, the implication and appositeness of the invocation slokas of the Epics and Puranas, invoking the grace of Narayana and Saraswati, will be abundantly clear. It may also be pertinently inferred that this invocation is also addressed indirectly to the seven great sages (Saptarshi) in whom the goddess Saraswati entered at the instance of God Narayana, i.e., in whom Saraswati initiated and infused the Vedic lore† which was given out to the world in the Epics, Puranas, etc. This is the revelation by Narayana in the Indian Epics and the invocation verse at the beginning of its reading refers to it.

The great philosopher Kapila, who conceived the idea of God Narayana, ascribed the origin of the creation of the earth and its creatures to Prakṛiti and Puruṣa.

The Pouranic conception of god Narayana as lying on the head of the great snake Basuki, who is reputed to hold the earth, and Lakshmi the goddess of prosperity sitting at His feet fully controlled by Him, explains the invocation (in the invocation verse) of Narottama Nara, the first Puruṣa, the best of all creation, above the influence of success or prosperity in the mundane world personified in goddess Lakshmi and the churning of the ocean by means of the snake Basuki and the mountain Mandar gives clear indication of the place where it took place, namely, in the ocean lying by the side of India.

* Ramayana Uttarakanda Canto 61

† Mbh Shanti Parva Chapter 336

INDO-ARYAN EPIC GENESIS.

The present age differs materially from the past, but it wants to judge the past with the present, and men want harmony and solidity of truth based on history in the Epic. They forget that the Epic tries to awaken those latent feelings of benevolence and sympathy from which the intellectual and moral greatness of mankind grows. It wants to prove that the vale of tears is the veritable temple of God where service is to be performed to convert the most alarming evils into the greatest blessings.

There is a great truth in the saying "Innocence is bliss." Primitive men could read the hieroglyphics which they invented and disdained to seek divinity or poetry in flowers. They had faith and instinct as animals, which they lost with education and culture. They loved truth and bore no malice. There was no vendetta nor vandalism. The Indian Epic did not grow out of any vendetta. There has been vandalism so far as the Epic is concerned. The Mahabharata may really be called the true great Epic of India.

What the Bible is to the Christians the Mahabharata is to the Hindus. A general account of the historical literary condition under which the literature of the Bharata Samhita and the Mahabharata sprang up and was welded together or separated from age to age must naturally be a very interesting study.

It has presented to European Sanskrit scholars of great repute a veritable Tower of Babel. They found it very hard to trace the state of progress and growth on account of its vast material and variety of subjects.

They failed to find the clue and the bearing of so many divisions of the great Epic, sometimes full of repetitions and contradictions. Though they were convinced of the many reconstructions, revisions and inclusions of outside matter, yet they want in it unified work by one poet. However, it must be said that all credit is due to J. Dahlmann for his *bonafide* attempt to prove it to be so. He was followed by the great Professor Sylvain Levi, who explains the Mahabharata as "a deliberate composition organically and artistically spread around a central fact and inspired by a dominant sentiment which penetrates and permeates it." He found it to be a code of Kshatriya discipline as practised by the Bhagavatas with all its exaggerations and episodes, with all its varied and luxuriant mass of detail.

The task of tracing the origin of the Epics is beset with difficulties. History in the strict modern sense of the word is not known to have existed in the Vedic or post-Vedic period. The first glimmering of anything like historical accounts appears in the Indian Epics themselves, and though it is difficult to separate the chaff from the grain, yet some connected accounts may be culled from the Epics. It is for this that the accounts of events of the Epic and post-Epic periods may be hazarded with some degree of certainty, but those of the pre-Epic periods, resting as they do purely on inferences based on circumstantial evidence, cannot be asserted authoritatively.

The Indian Epics are more records of Indian religious developments than of chronological events. From the available mass of evidence—Vedic, Upanishadic, Pauranic, etc—it seems reasonable to infer that religion or worship in the Vedic and pre-Epic periods was only ritualistic and consisted only in the performance of religious rites, austerities, ablutions, offerings and sacrifices. Love of God, attachment to the Almighty Father, or delight in singing His praises formed no part of their religious creed. The Bharata Savitri, which Vyasa preached to his son, Sukdeva, contains reference only to the observance of religious rites, pursuit of success and attainment of desires, as the *summum bonum* of their creed*. This Bharata Savitri has been repeated and explained in the great Epic, times out of number, at the time of bereavements of kings and Rishis, and this formed the key-note of the Bharata Samhita and the Mahabharata. Narada gave good advice to his father-in-law, the king Sunjoya, when he lost his son, and so on. It soon became evident that the worshippers of Vedic deities came to the conclusion that there was no predicate in the human language worthy of God and the Upanishad spoke of Him with words of 'No' 'No', i.e., they rejected one after another, all that was chosen to represent God. The Epic must find an echo of it in its lessons by examples. This was not the only stage of peculiar human progress of the mind in India.

The pro-ritualistic proclivities of the age brought forth a compendium of liturgical rules and rules of conduct for the kings, priests and the people in the Bharata Samhita. The maxims and rules instead of being presented as dry aphorisms and harsh injunctions, were set off against the pleasing background of parables and legends of kings, priests and the people, with the result that the rules and maxims easily appealed to the imagination of the people and, by trying to imitate and emulate the examples set out in the Samhita, they instinctively followed the rules and maxims inculcated therein. Thus the Bharata Samhita

* The Mbh Swargarohan Parva, Chapter V

may be said to have originated in the school of the Vedic sacrifices, and the four *Asvins* (stages) of domestic and religious life. During the *Naga* sacrifice of king *Jamamejaya* when the great *Rishi Krishna Durvasas* was asked to do so, he was exhorted by the king to relate the story of *Krishna* and *Parthiva*. *Asvamedha* one of his disciples, *Asvamedha* then related the story in brief as it was in the *Asvamedha*. Omitting the said short story, the story of *Krishna* and *Parthiva* was formulated certain points in the *Asvamedha* was omitted. Evidently the *Asvamedha* was the source of the *Asvamedha* with this request. The *Asvamedha* was the *Asvamedha* of *Sakas* and it took time to write the *Asvamedha* of king *Jamamejaya* and *Asvamedha* was ready with the *Asvamedha* —

[illegible]

It was not said then and there as it took the author three years to complete the book in answer to the questions put. There is mention of Vyasa's Ashrama in the Hinayyas where he used to teach the pupils referred to in the table of contents of the Mahabharata, but no mention is made of Badrikasrama.

* Mbb Adi Paria Chapters 10 and 11

† Mbh Adi Parva, Chapter, 62

± The Mbh. Adi Parva, Chapter LXII, page 83 Ver. 52-53

"Living on the side of that foremost of mountains, Mahadeva of great vows scorched the gods greatly. At the foot of these mountains, in a retired spot, Parashara's son of great ascetic merit, viz., Vyasa, taught the Vedas to his disciples. Those disciples were the highly blessed Sumanta, Vaishampayana, Jaimini of great wisdom and Paila of great ascetic merit. Shuka went to that charming asylum where his father, the great ascetic Vyasa, was living surrounded by his disciples."

Thereafter, during king Janmejaya's Raj Suya sacrifice this Mahabharata was recited.

From the short Bharata Samhita† to the full-fledged Epic Mahabharata was not a matter of a few years. Several decades or centuries might have intervened between their respective compositions. Religion or worship of God, as foreshadowed in the Epics, still consisted in the performance of rites and ceremonies and prayers to God for granting of boons, fulfilment of desires and attainment of success. Love or attachment for God is faintly foreshadowed in the love of Draupadi, but still it is very imperfectly traceable in the Epics. To depict the God-head and to make Him attractive and loveable, the conception must be all comprehensive, and the more the conception approximates our own human feelings and sentiments, the more it appeals to our sentiment and love. Vyasa saw that in depicting God and inculcating the forms of his worship, there was this defect, that he had left out the factor of love and had not made Him loveable. He was therefore not satisfied with his production, i.e., the Mahabharata.

In the Mahabharata, which he had composed for degraded Brahmins, Sudras and females, who could not understand and read the Vedas, he had depicted the God Narayana attainable through knowledge, which was not suitable for them. He was therefore not content with the Mahabharata and sought the advice of the celestial Rishi Narada, when he appeared before him. Narada told him that simple performance of religious rites and ceremonies, without singing of God's praise, could not bring real contentment. He advised him, by recounting his own previous life's experiences, that singing of God's glory would create attachment and love for God, which alone would bring him peace of mind and fulfil his desire, and he exhorted him to write a book singing God's glory and praise. This led to Vyasa composing the Bhagabata. The Mahabharata did not sing the praise of Krishna, nor did it glorify him as a god. The Bhagabata Gita did, and first supplied the elements of love or Prem in worshipping God. And the Harivamsa too, was composed to supply the omission in the Epic about Krishna's divinity. From this it will be clear that the Bhagabata was not an integral part of the Mahabharata, but was an entirely different and subsequent pro-

* Shanti Parva, Chapter CCCXXVIII page 520. versus 24-27

† See Appendix "B"

duction in which Vyasa's authorship of the Mahabharata and the Bhagabata is unambiguously acknowledged

Apantaratama was another name of Vyasa and he was said to have sprung from the God Narayana. Vyasa inculcated the worship of Swagun Brahma (i.e., God endowed with active attributes) in the Mahabharata and the Bhagabata. This is why God Narayana is represented as having killed the demons Madu and Kaitab in Hayagraba form (Horse-faced), i.e., in a Swagun form, as he could not have done it in His Nirguna form, which is unaffected by feelings. This perhaps preceded the age when Avatars or incarnations appeared. If Hayagraba had been an Avatar, like the Nrisingha (man-lion) form of God, it would have found a place in the category of the different Avatars. It appears that Brahma performed a sacrifice for the destruction of Madhu and Kaitaba, and in the ceremony a horse was sacrificed. This, in course of time, gave rise to Aswamedha sacrifice (horse sacrifice) in which Narayana was worshipped.

The sacred writings described the horse as being "bathed and decorated with rich trappings, the variously coloured goat being before him." The goat is killed first that it may make known to the gods that the horse is coming to them. Three times the horse is led around the sacrificial fire. He is then bound to a post and immolated with an axe. His flesh is roasted on a spit, boiled and made into balls and eaten by all who have assisted at the sacrifice.

There is a most graphic and detailed account of the ceremony in two hymns of the Rig Samhita (I, 162 and 163). These describe the slaughtering and burning of the horse with a naked realism that is almost horrible. Yet they also address the soul of the horse in mystic strains, recognising it as identified with the gods through the sacrifice, as even on earth it had been their symbol.

The horse was considered one of the most valuable articles of wealth among the Indo-Aryans. The well-known mythology of the early Aryans that the horse was churned out of the ocean by the Dayas and Asuras, only testifies to the estimation in which the animal was held by them. The story is related in the Mahabharata of the sage Calava paying as honorarium to his master Visvamitra 600 horses, which the latter demanded from his pupil on the completion of the latter's studies. The quarrel between the sage Bamadeva and the king Sala, son of Parikshit, which is narrated in the Mahabharata (Udyoga Parva, Chapter 114), was occasioned by Sala's refusing to make over the two horses which he had taken from the sage. The king Sala and his brother Dala, who succeeded him to the throne, were both killed by

Bamadeva, because neither of them would hand over to him the two horses which were his property. The great sage Chyavana would only accept a cow from the great Nihusa in preference to all other gifts which the king was prepared to bestow on him.

These stories illustrate the importance in which horses and cows were held by the Aryans in ancient India. They represented the most valuable articles of wealth to kings and sages alike. It is probable that the importance of the horse preceded in point of time that of the cow, and points to a period of civilisation when people lived by hunting. This epoch was succeeded by the age when agriculture and dairy farming became the chief means of livelihood of the people.

The following extracts from the Samkhyaana Sutras (xvi-1) throws some light on the literature which the Brahmins possessed in addition to what we are accustomed to call the Vedas. Incidentally, it also supplies one with the key to unlock the treasure house of the Mahabharata, and leads one straight into its earliest stratum, the original theme which was developed into its present mighty structure.

"At the Horse Sacrifice, the Adharyu calls upon singers who sing to the lute (Vinaganaginas), and invites them to celebrate the king who then performs the sacrifice, together with other virtuous kings of old. On the first day of the sacrifice the priest tells the story, which begins with Manu Vairasvata. As the people of Manu were men and there are men present at the sacrifice, the priest teaches the householders by telling this story. He then says 'the rich verses are the Veda, this is the Veda' and recites a hymn.

"On the second day he tells the story which begins with Yama Vairasvata (from the Satapatha), as the people of Yama were the fathers and there were fathers present he teaches the elders by this story. He then says 'the Iajurveda is the Veda, this is the Veda' and recites an Anuvaka 'Asvamedhika' of the Yajush.

"On the third day he tells the story which begins with Varuna Aditya. As the people of Varuna were the Gandharvas, and as they are present, he teaches the young and fair youths by this story. He then says, 'The Atharva veda is the Veda, this is the Veda' and recites the Vaishaja, a work on medicine.

"On the fourth day, he tells the story which begins with the Soma Vaishnava (from the Satapatha). As the people of Soma were the Apsaras, and as these were present, he teaches the young and fair maids by this story. He then says, 'The Angirasa Veda is the Veda, this is the Veda', and recites the Ghora, another work of the Atharvanikas.

"On the fifth day he tells the story which begins with Arbuda Kadraveya. As the people of Arbuda were the Sarpas or the snake charmers he teaches the Sarpas or the snake charmers by this story. He then says, 'The Sarpa vidya is the Veda, this is the Veda' and recites the Sarpa vidya.

"On the sixth day he tells the story which begins with Kuvira Vaisravana. As the people of Kuvira were Rakshas, and as these were present, he teaches the evil doers, by this story. He then says 'The Raksho vidya is the Veda, this is the Veda' and recites the Raksho vidya.

'On the seventh day he tells the story which begins with Asita Dhanvra. As his men were the Asuras and as these were present, he teaches the usurers (Kusidin) by this story. He then says 'The Asuravida is the Veda, this is the Veda' and performs a trick by sleight of hand.

'On the eight day he tells the story which begins with Matsya nammada. As his men were the creatures of the water and as these were present, he teaches the Matsyas (fishes) or the fishermen, by this story. He then says 'The Itihasa-Veda is the Veda, this is the Veda', and recites an Itihasa.

'On the ninth day he tells the story which begins with Parkshya Vai prasyata. As his men were the birds and as these were present he teaches the birds, or the young students (Brahmacharin), by this story. He then says 'The Purana Veda is the Veda, this is the Veda', and recites the Purana.

'On the tenth day he tells the story which begins with Dharma Indra (from the Satyapatha). As his men were the gods, and as these were present, he teaches the young, learned and poor priests by this story. He then says 'The Samaveta is the Veda, this is the Veda' and sings the Sama.

'It is full of the flames of sacrifice, in fact it contains innumerable allusions to the performance of sacrifice and is familiar with all the ceremonies connected with it.'

In the days of the Rig Veda, God was apprehensible but not comprehensible, when it became so, by the progress of culture and education, then the performers' taste, devotion and inclination made it imperative to divide the distinct functions of the Vedic religion and to amplify it where necessary. Sanatkumar and Narada were the authors of the Narayana section spoken of before, and Apantariksha came out of darkness not as any maker of Vedic hymns, but became distinguished as the arranger of the hymns and rituals, and received the epithet of Veda-Vyasa. He occupied a position analogous to that of Bhishma to the Kuru family, as a grand-father, at a later age.

The intense love expressed in the music of Vedic languages is found in Sama Veda, the intricacy of Vedic formula, worship of sacrifices, are compiled in due order in Yajur Veda, and the mystic magical powers were comprised in the Atharva Veda. This was the arrangement made in Vedic literature for the convenience of the general public—sacrifices instead of personal sacrifice for individual selfish ambition and success. But when that failed to create the desired effect on the public mind and devotional spirit, then Bharata Samhita was compiled and recited at the sacrifices to illumine the general public. It was not until the ten Upanishads received the appellation of Maha or Mahat that the idea of enlarging the Bharata Samhita was conceived. The scope of this word was far more comprehensive in the days of Panini, when it was considered to mean eternal. The name 'Mahabharata' has a clear connection with Mahatva of Samkhya Philosophy, as well as with the greatness of

the glorious kings and sages in their sacrifices for the general public. What history the Epic represents has survived because, at that time poetry alone pleased the people, just as it is now composed mainly for that purpose. It is not exactly a case of the survival of the text in Epic poetry, but of what pleased and suited the taste of the many for its survival.

Professor Max Muller's words will convey my meaning.—

'Memory and oral tradition are indeed wonderful keepers of popular poetry, and when once certain productions of that popular poetry have been recognised and invested with a sacred authority, I do not hesitate to say that poems are safer in the memory than in manuscripts. But there are certain influences in the first gathering and in the later adaptation of popular poetry to changing popular tastes, which justify us in saying that in one sense the poetry of the people is not the work of one poet, but the result of the combined labour of many popular poets and many popular critics

"Facts, however, are stronger than arguments. I have seen Hindus who know the Veda by heart and who could detect by ear any misprint any false accent, in my edition of the Rigveda. As to the possibility of composing long poems without writing them, I shall not argue like a lawyer and point out that Homer, if he was blind, could not possibly have written the Iliad and the Odyssey, but could only have dictated them, always supposing that writing had been known at his time. But what concerns us is that among the peasants of Finland among people ignorant of reading and writing, large fragments of epic poetry have been discovered during the first half of our century, entirely preserved by oral tradition never written before, either by the poet or by his admirers and yet easily fitted together into one epic poem. I wish I had time to explain to you the process by which these poems had been preserved, and at last have been collected, printed, critically edited, and translated. But I think you will have seen, even from these short remarks, in what sense popular poetry, such as the Homeric poems for instance, may be said to reflect not only the thoughts of one poetic mind, but at the same time the thoughts of many people who would not have listened to that is to say, who would not have allowed any poetry to survive, except what they themselves approved of."

The exact date has not yet been ascertained conclusively, but it seems to be certain that the period in which the Indian Epics grew out of the Bharata Samhita and attained that degree of perfection to which Vyasa and Valmiki brought them, must be before the Grecian Epic of Homer, 1,000 B.C. The art of writing in India was known long before it was in any other part of the world. The Greeks learnt the practice of multiplying copies of books by transcription for public sale and introduced it in their country in 500 B.C. Athens had a special market-place for selling books, and it developed into a regular book fair in the process of time. The old lays of the Deva and Asura fight, handed down by oral traditions, were fixed by means of writing in the Bharata Samhita. This is the Britta Gita recited in the Mahabharata.

The Bharata Smṛiti is directly connected with the R̥gveda, whatever links it up with the hymns and metaphysics of the R̥gveda, should be esteemed to be the earliest portions of the Mahābhārata, i.e., they constitute the integral parts of the Bhārata Smṛiti.

One finds distinct mention in the combined R̥k Verse X 167 4, by Viśvāmitra and Jamadagni, that the river Sindhu was made fordable by them and they demonstrate that from Central India people went to the Punjab and Vasistha lived in the Punjab, where the king Śimbarana took refuge when he was defeated by the Panchala king mentioned in the Mahābhārata. The chant of Pithu, son of Vena, shows how he got supremacy over animals (*vide* Panchaviṃśa Brāhmaṇa, pages 325/6). It is evident that in the Vedic age wife, children and domestic animals used to give great support to householders. Kings sought the co-operation of the chiefs of the people as much as the help of the cattle and domestic animals to rule the country, marriages became a necessity not only for race propagation, but also for the secondary necessity of receiving this support.

Bṛihaspati's chaplainship of the gods and the merit of giving fees in cows and horses are mentioned as follows —

“Nine versed agnistoma (1)”

“As its morning service when the Narasamsa cups have been deposited, he assigns eleven (cows) as sacrificial fee, at the midday service (when the Narasamsa cups have been deposited) he assigns (eleven) (cows) with a horse as twelfth. Both these groups (of eleven and twelve) he separates (from all the dakṣina-cows that stand together to the south of the sacrificial ground and he gives them to the officiating priests), at the afternoon service (he assigns) eleven (cows, when the Narasamsa cups have been deposited), and he gives them at the barren cow (i.e., when this cow destined for Mitra and Varuna, has been immolated). The so-called Narasamsa cups are deposited five times during the whole rite, see C II 147 a 153 (Morning service) 189 b 197 (Midday service), 230 b (afternoon service). In our text, the first of each (147 a and 189b) and the last (230 b) are meant. The last eleven cows are given after the rite described in C II 256. Usually the dakṣinas are given at the midday service (C II 191). The Jaim br. ('Auswahl' No. 139) commends other methods of dividing the dakṣinas (2)”. “These make thirty three dakṣina (cows), there are thirty three deities, he reaches the deities. The horse is the thirty fourth of the dakṣinas. Prajapati is the thirty fourth of the deities (Cp. X. I 16), he reaches Prajapati (3)”. “This is the consecration (Aśva is an ekaha with which a consecration, an anointing obhiṣeka, is connected) of Bṛihaspati. Bṛihaspati desired to obtain the chaplainship (the office of Purohita) of the Gods. He performed this (sacrifice) and obtained the chaplainship of the Gods (4)”. “He who knows this obtains a chaplainship (5)”. “It is the consecration as chief judge (the Sthapati was probably a Vaisya. Some texts (T Br. and Kath) describe a śava, which is designated by Baudh. (XVIII 3) and Ap. (XXII 25, 25) as vaiśyasava or sthapatīśava. Laty VIII 7 10, ‘Whom they put at their head, amongst these he should henceforth lead a friendly disposed life (?; differently the commentary, but cp. Laty VIII, 12.1. Kāstravṛttim vartayet) and they should call him Sthapati’. ‘Nidāna sūtra purodhakamayajña uttarah sthapatīśava va, samāṇaś sraṣṭhye samvṛṇān). He whom they consecrate for the office

of a chief judge should perform this (sacrifice) (6) " "He who knows this gets an office as chief judge (7) " "He is sprinkled (i.e., inaugurated) (whilst sitting) on a black antelope-hide. This (hide) is visibly the priestly lustro (according to TS VI 1 3 1, the black antelope-hide is identical, by its white spots, with the Rigrada, by its black spots, with the Samavela, according to T Br II 7-3 3, it is the form of the Brahman, of re and saman), he is inaugurated on priestly lustro (8) ""

This explains why the great priests' births were ascribed to Mitra and Varuna rather than their actual births. Spiritual life was then taken to be the real birth. But the power of the priests and the celebration of sacrifices received a rude shock from the great Kapila in his new philosophy.

The hermitage of Ayoddhaumya, with which the Mahabharata begins, is one of the earliest types of religious institutions where the three Vedas were taught, and plays an important part in the development of Indian thought and religion. The pupils of Ayoddhaumya were Vedic sages. Both Gautama and Uddalaka-Aruni were interested in the new philosophy of the Kshatriyas. The former was the founder of a new system of education, since he realised that the hardships through which students passed in the school of Ayoddhaumya were unnecessary for the purpose of higher education, and he may be said to have developed a new system of education of which the university of Saunaka became the best exponent. He abolished the course of physical hardship as unnecessary for intellectual and moral education.

Now it is quite evident that a new school of thought had come into existence in the later Vedic period. The sacrifices with which the Vedic hymns were connected had become too expensive for the kings. In fact, there is ample evidence in the Mahabharata that they financially ruined not a few of the rulers who performed them. The Brahmin priests charged ruinous fees at these sacrifices, and considered these as the only means for repairing their fallen fortunes. Complication of rituals, necessitating repetition of the formulas without the slightest deviation from those laid down, grew apace with the desire to extort as much money from the kings as the priests could. The only reward that was held out to the kings was that of heaven, but this sordid, other-world worldliness on which the priests banked, was carried too far, and it resulted in a widespread revolt on the part of the Kshatriya princes.

But the Brahmins had alliances with the important non-Aryan communities and also with the subjects of the king who liked the performance of these sacrifices, not only because festivals were always popular, but also because many of those who came to attend these sacrifices were fed free of cost at the expense of the kings. The kings therefore could

* Pancavimsa Brahmana, pages 465-66, Chap. XVII 11

not openly protest, but were driven to the necessity of also thinking deeply on spiritual matters and evolving a metaphysical system by which they could meet the Brahmins on their own ground. The Brahmins had developed almost a complete and an almost ununderstandable liturgy. The Kshatriyas brought out a philosophical system as difficult for the ordinary people to understand.

Now the Brahmins were completely out-witted. The Brahmin sages, of whom the most important were Gautama, *alias* Veda, and Uddalaka Aruni, both disciples of Ayoddharmya, threw off their pretensions of intellectual superiority and approached the Kshatriya princes for learning their esoteric doctrines on Atman and Paramatman. Now it is quite open to any person to object to this explanation of the inner significance of the Upanishad on the ground that the philosophical doctrines embodied therein are of such a sublime nature that they cannot be explained by material reasons. But those who have followed the processes of historical evolution will admit that the deepest and profoundest thought of the human mind is the reflection either of a material change or a material want.

Dr Winternitz, as also many other scholars, has pointed out the Kshatriya origin of the speculations contained in the Upanishads.

"In the Upanishad, however, we are repeatedly told that kings or warriors are in possession of the highest knowledge, and that Brahmins go to them for instruction. Thus the Brahmin Gautama, father of Svetaketu, goes to king Pravahana in order to be instructed by him concerning the Beyond. And it is related that the desire of Gautama was very awkward for the king for the doctrine which he had to proclaim had never before penetrated to the Brahmins and therefore it is that in all the worlds the mastery has fallen to the share of the warrior class. Finally, however, the king does impart the doctrine to him,—and it is the doctrine of transmigration, which here, where for the first time it appears clearly and distinctly, proves to be a doctrine which emanated from the warrior class, and was originally foreign to Brahmanical theology.* Another passage proves that the chief doctrine of the Upanishads too, the doctrine of the Atman, the all one, originated in non Brahmanical circles. Here five highly learned Brahmins betake themselves to the wise Uddalaka Aruni, in order to learn from him the doctrine of the Atman. He, however, thought to himself 'The great and learned scholars will question me, and I shall not be able to reply to everything. Well, I will direct them to someone else.' And he directed them to King Asvapati Kaikeya, to whom they actually went for instructions†"

The university life of Naimisharanya, which is described in the Adikanda of the Mahabharata, in the questions and answers, shows a much more developed culture than the earlier system in which the great

* Chandogya—Upanishad, V-3, Brhadaranyaka Up., VI 2. In the Kaushitaki Up., I the Kshatriya Citra instructs the "first of the priests," Aruni, about the Beyond.

† Dr Winternitz's "History of Indian Literature" pp 230-31. Chandogya-Up., V II ff. A version of this narrative is already to be found in Sat., X. 61.

Vedic sages could only take two or three disciples. This stage is described very vividly in the Pausya Parva. The sages and their disciples mentioned in this connection are all composers of Vedic hymns. The university of Naimisharanya, in which Saunaka is described as the Chancellor (Kulapati) of education, centres round the performance of a twelve years sacrifice. He is also the examiner who sets questions to Souti, and the answers which the latter gives are not for the information of Saunaka, but are given with a view to show the progress Souti, son of Romaharshana, has achieved in the Vedic lore and practice in which he has received instruction. Where the answers are wrong, Saunaka merely corrects him with a smile*.

The names of the disciples of Ayoddhaummya are mentioned as composers of Vedic hymns and were necessarily separated from the age of Janmejaya II by a long interval of time. In the period of the Mahabharata the university life was much more developed than in the times of Nahusa, Yayati and Janmejaya, the grandson of Yayati. Ayoddhaummya has been wrongly assumed to be a near relative of Dhaummya, the priest of Yudhishthira, but this is transposing the two names in an inverted order. For Dhaummya's father was Astika and his brother was Debala of Jaigisabya, whose disciple he became to reach the goal. Ayoddhaummya, being the preceptor of three pupils who later on became three great sages—two of them are distinguished in Vedic literature as composers of hymns—must be assigned to the early period of Janmejaya I, the grandson of Yayati.

The Bharata Samhita, however, has connection with the less developed form. The Ashrama of Ayoddhaummya is the prototype of later universities. The great sage Veda, who was no other than Gautama†, was one of the three disciples of Ayoddhaummya. Now Gautama was a contemporary of Saudasa and Janmejaya. This Janmejaya could not be Janmejaya II the son of Parikshit, the son of Abhimanyu, the son of Arjuna. There were several Parikshits and Janmejayas confused in the Ramayana and the Mahabharata line of kings. The Janmejaya mentioned as a contemporary of Gautama, whose disciple he was, could only be the grandson of Yayati.

In the Pausya Parva, Gautama is mentioned as Veda. The great resemblance of Veda with Gautama in the Utamka Anugita, in Asvamedha Parva, and in the incidents of their lives gives reasonable ground to conclude that they were identical. But Gautama was not Deerghatama Gautama, father of Kakshivat, for this Gautama married Ahalya, twin sister of Divo Dasa, king of Benares, a composer of Vedic

* See Adikanda, Mahabharata. † See Asvamedha Parva Utamka Anugita.

hymns and the father of Indian medical science. The daughter of Gautama and Ahilya was married to Utamka.

There can be no doubt that the current Mahabharata commences with the story of the snake sacrifice of Janmejaya. Utamka came to the king to incite him against the snakes and their king, Takshaka, who stole the Kundali given to him by the king Saudasa or Pausya, the Ikshvaku king of Ayodhya. It was at the instance of Utamka that Janmejaya undertook the sacrifice. The legend of Utamka is the main theme of Pausya Parva. Is it not a little curious that in it occurs the mention of fire in its early form of horse, and the mention of Atma and Paramatma in the forms of two women? The subject matter contained in this section of the Adikanda is further elaborated in the Bana Parva etc. Many things connected with this legend, which are treated in an unintelligible manner in Pausya Parva, reappear in a clearer form in the later version.

The important question of anachronism could not be overlooked. Utamka who was a contemporary of Bhisudeb and the Pandavas, could not be so with Janmejaya II. In the Anugita of Asvamedha Parva, Utamka did not get immortality or any such boon, making his existence at the time of Janmejaya II possible. It is apparent from this how part of the Bharata Samhita has been foisted upon the Mahabharata with the story of the snake. There is hardly any date to fix the time of the conflict between the Kurus and the Nagas, which loomed large in the political background of ancient India through the different phases of its cultural development. There were two Parikshits and Janmejayas in the Kuru line of kings. Nor is this all. Utamka became famous for slaying Dhundhu, son of Madhukritava, through the king Kubalasya, son of Brihadasya. Utamka belongs to an earlier period beyond the shadow of a doubt. The annotator Nilkantha cited him and Parasara as performers of snake sacrifice, etc.*

But the importance of the Bharata Samhita as a historical manual of a very early age should be sufficiently stressed. The kings whose deeds are celebrated in it do not belong to a particular dynasty as in the Ramayana. The Bharata and the Mahabharata describe the achievements of the more important kings, who had ruled from Vedic times over different parts of India. The Puranas, which derived their stories and themes from the Epics, were much later works and, as it is alleged, were composed at Naimisharanya, which became famous. The Mahabharata as recited by Sauti to Saunaka, who was the Chancellor of the University of Naimisharanya, was a much later

* Santi Parva 73 Chapter 33 verses footnote

version of the great Epic and this is conclusively proved by a palpable anachronism which occurs in it. The Bharata genealogy mentions Janmejaya I as being one of the early kings of the Lunar dynasty. Santanu found the boy on the river-side practising archery and took him to his palace. This and the story of his birth, connected with two incidents and Ganges falling in love with the father of Santanu, make the whole affair look suspicious and contradictory.

Bhisma is called one of the eight Basus who came to earth by the curse of Vasistha, to whom they did not make obeisance and they prayed to Ganges and were blessed with salvation from the curse by her good offices. The discourse between Yudhishthira and Bhisma, a substance of a dialogue between Indryota Saunaka and Janmejaya, is set forth in great detail in Santi Parva. This same king is mentioned as one of those celebrated kings of ancient India who is said to have laid down his life for the sake of Brahmins. This Janmejaya was the grandson of Yayati, and son of Puru, and cannot be the Parikshit under which name the dialogue was wrongly entered in the Mahabharata for the simple reason that Bhisma died long before Janmejaya II, the son of Parikshit II, in the line of Arjuna, was born. Besides, Janmejaya the Kuru king is mentioned in the Satapatha Brahmana as a king and Brahmanical teacher of the age. Janmejaya, the Kurus and the Panchalas are mentioned in the Ramayana and the town of Hastinapura (ii, 68, 13).

Religious worship and family pride were the distinguishing feature of ancient India before the caste system came into vogue and descended to be one of the weakest of all human frailties. Every endeavour was made to secure a place in the book of religion or of philosophy, so that one's name could go down to posterity and one's glory be recited by the rhapsodists or the pouranics in the public assembly. The lists of Solar and Lunar kings in both the Epics contain the names of Nahusa and Yayati, in the latter list they occur as the ninth and tenth names, in the contemporaneous list of Solar kings, they are mentioned as the 35th and 36th in descent from the original progenitor. Jahnu, the Kuru king of North Panchala, is a contemporary of Bhagiratha, the Solar king. The name of Saudasa occurs as the 26th king of the same line. Now the list of Solar kings is somewhat confusing, for in the lists of Mithila and Ayodhya kings which were recited at the time of Rama's marriage, Janaka is placed as the 26th in descent from Nimi, whereas Dasaratha is 39th from Marichi, who was a contemporary of Nimi. For, the name of Naimisharanya owes its origin to Nimi's sacrifice.

Twelve or thirteen names of kings must be eliminated from the list of Ayodhya kings, in order to make Dasaratha and Janaka con-

temporaries, which they certainly were. These names must have been tacked on to the Ayodhya list from those of a collateral line. If this correction is made, Saudasa and Janamejaya could be shewn to have been contemporaries and this is also the opinion of Mr Pargiter, who maintains that the list of the Ramayana is incorrect by ten or eleven kings. This is what he says,

"Putting aside Dillipa, because the comparison from him is uncertain, since the Ramayana names only one Dillipa, while the Puranas mention two, and starting from Raghu about whom there is no doubt he (Kalidasa) gives four kings, Raghu, Aja, Dasaratha and Rama as in the Puranas, instead of the Ramayana version of 14 or 15 kings."

The author of the chronology of India finds that 'the Aikshaku king Dasaratha, the father of Rama the northern Pancala king Atithigra Divodasa the brother of Abalya, Senajit, the southern Lancala king Sarvabhauma and Iksha II, the sons of Viduratha of the Hastinapura line Krti, the father of Uparicara whose descendant Bhadratha I founded the kingdom of Magadha Romapada Dasaratha of the dynasty of Anga Sraddhwaja Jambha the father of Sita king Salwant of the Yadu dynasty, and the father of Vatsabha the Hathaia, all these ten kings belonged to the same age namely the age of the Divodasa

"The confusion in the lists of kings in the two Indian Epics is clear, and what is more, there is reversal in the order in the Puranas. The genealogy and chronology of the ancient kings may be of absorbing interest to students of history, but there is ample ground to believe that it is almost a hopeless task, due to one man having so many names, misreading and introduction of spurious names."

The Rig Veda mentions that Gargi, the son of Vajineya Bharadvaja, killed Varci and Samlara in the country of Udabraj, and Prastoka, the son of Srujaya, gave him presents as well as Divodasa (Rig II, 49, 22, 23, 25). The commentator, Sayana, says that Prostoka and Srujaya were the same as Atithigra Divodasa and Asvatha. The Vedic, Epic, and Puranic evidences seldom coincide and show anachronisms.

In the time of Asvalayana Grihya Sutra, the Bharata Samhita and the Mahabharata were known as two distinct works. How the one came to be tacked on to the other is in itself a very important fact.

In the Asvalayana Sruta Sutra (II 6 10) one finds that Bhargava, Vaitshya and Svetasa were the famous Pravaras of a section of the Bhrigus, viz., of the Yakshas, Badhanlas, Maunas, Mankas, etc. In the Pravara patronymic forms were used. The Gotra and Pravara are important signs, not of lineage but to trace the priests and the form of worship the line of kings followed or changed. In the Vedic age anybody born in a family or Gotra could enter a different one if he liked, as Grtsamada Angrasa entered the Bhargava order. The Gotra was established by Arstisena, the son of Sala, in the Krti age. Arstisena

* Professor Pargiter's "Ancient Indian Historical Tradition," page 121.

† Professor Pargiter's "Ancient Indian Historical Tradition," page 47.

‡ Ibid page 21.

was a Gotra title like Kausika, Vasistha, Saurika, Rathilara and Bhargava, and the Mahabharata mentions only four gotras. It will be seen that in the Paurava genealogy none of Devapi's ancestors had the name Rstisena, whose instance would have justified the name Arstisena for Devapi, for variant forms of the names of persons are always common in the Puranas.

The authors of Rig Vedic hymns and the circumstances under which these hymns were composed are no less important to decipher the age and time of the man named in the genealogy. The Rig Veda contains the compositions of Santanu. The Mahabharata has two lists of Paurava kings. The one given in the 94th Chapter may be older but is not very clear. But one significant fact is that one Panchala king invaded the kingdom of Hastinapur, and the king Samvaran took refuge in the Punjab and became a follower of Vasistha and recovered the kingdom. He married the daughter of the Sun, Tapati. In India the descendants of Paurava kings as well as followers of gods Ikshaku and Bharata, took their names as Solar and Lunar dynasties.

The great fight which is mentioned in the hymns of the seventh Mandala (18, 19, 33) of the Rig Veda between Sudasa, king of the first Aryans, assisted by Tritsus, descendants of Vasistha, on the one hand, and ten kings, five of the second Aryan peoples and five of their non-Aryan allies on the other, was not amplified in the Mahabharata as the European scholars are led to believe. Since the Rig Vedic Bharatas were not the Bharatas of the Mahabharata—the descendants of Bharata, son of Dushyanta, were Lunar race Aryans—they were distinguished as Daushyanti Bharata in Satapatha Brahmana. Hence the Vedic connection which is sought to be established by means of this episode cannot stand.

Though the Mahabharata is explicitly a work which was undertaken with a view to popularise Vedic observances and practices among the people, it was done not by making the war between Sudasa and the Yadu and Turvasu the main story of the Epic in a transformed manner, but by enunciating their Vedic practices to the people at the Vedic sacrifice. Yadu was said to have been the progenitor of the Rakshasas in the forest of Crouncha (Uttarakanda Ramayana VII, Canto 69). His father Yayati called upon his sons, one after the other, to save him from the curse of his father-in-law Sukracharya by transferring to him their youthful energy. None of his sons but Poru agreed to do so. It was a very romantic example of filial devotion and piety of the age, but it was also a sort of test for selecting a right successor to the throne in Ancient India. It will be seen that as soon as Poru agreed to do so.

the king retired to the forest to practise asceticism, placing the reins of administration in the hands of his dutiful son Poru

Valmiki, descended as he was from Sukra, combined with his relationship with Yadu, son of Devyani, the daughter of Sukra, must have uttered the verse which is said to have been the inspiration Sloka giving birth to the composition of the Ramayana Vasistha and Vyasa are said to have suffered for the loss of their sons and the Epic owes its origin to this. Father and son are all but mortal, for which the world grew so anxious and selfish, and they are the real causes of all grief and attachment in this world. The father would not have remained for all time the satisfactory predicate of the godhead. Ancestor worship was thus displaced. It must not be lost sight of that it was in the schools of the Vedic sacrifice that the Bharata Samhita had its origin and development.

Unfortunately, the real character of the Mahabharata, its scope and function, being perhaps misunderstood by scholars, they have stressed the literary aspect of the work concerned with the war too strongly, to the exclusion of the earlier version of the Epic, which is embodied in the Bharata Samhita. Even such a learned scholar and student of Sanskrit literature as Professor Winternitz has been misled into thinking that the really relevant portions of the Bharata Samhita, such as the Pausya Parva, the Markendeya section of the Bana Parva, and the Narayana section in the Santi Parva lie outside the scope of the Epic proper. He also thinks that the Anusashana Parva, which is nothing but a "Manual of Law", became "a component part of the Mahabharata at a still later date", and that "it bears all the marks of a late fabrication". The opinion which is so dogmatically asserted is based, no doubt, upon the erroneous conception of the true character of the Bharata Samhita, which is partly a Manual of Law.

The well known Professor Sylvain Levi has been able partially to glimpse the inmost recesses of the Mahabharata when he says "that the Mahabharata is a deliberate composition organically and artistically spread around a central fact and inspired by a dominant sentiment which penetrates and permeates it, and that it can be compared with the Vinaya, the code of discipline of the Mula Sarvastivadin Buddhists". He is of opinion that the whole great Epic "with all its exaggerations and episodes, with all its varied and luxuriant mass of detail is based on nothing but a code of Kshatriya discipline as practised by the Bhagavatas".

The thesis which is here propounded is that the Mahabharata was originally intended for a wider purpose than the mere education of a certain class of men or Kshatriyas only, and that, having had its origin in one of the Vedic schools of sacrifice, it served the purpose of cultural uplift of the whole community, Aryans and non-Aryans, who congregated at these functions.

Etymologically the word Samhita means a "collection," but in its original sense it was applied to a collection of rules of conduct only with reference to the performance of sacrifices. The liturgical Samhita preceded in point of time the compilation of the Vedas as different Samhitas, which was done with a view to assist the different priests engaged in the sacrifices in the performance of their respective duties in the ceremony. The later Hindu law books took the title of Samhita, in order to acquire a special sacerdotal importance. The rules of conduct of the different castes were treated in the Dharma Sutras at an earlier period. The word for a collection of authoritative laws went by the name of Dharma Shashtra. The Bharata Samhita therefore has reference to the rules of conduct which were promulgated at the sacrifices and illustrated by means of stories, and does not mean or imply the great Kurukshetra war, which later on became the central theme of the current Epic.

It may be emphasised that the real reason for the compilation of the Bharata Samhita then was to establish peace and harmony among the different warring castes and tribes. The older Vedic sacrifices had become mechanical and soulless. The rituals which were performed were not understood, the symbol implied was hardly less so. The Atri Samhita lays down that no one who did not understand the rituals should be engaged in the performance of the sacrifices. As the purpose of these reformed sacrifices was not to create an atmosphere of mysticism, as every step in the sacrifice had a deep social and almost political significance, it was necessary that every word uttered, and everything done in connection with it, should be clearly understood.

The Bharata Samhita was a work which was partly ritualistic, partly anecdotal and partly theological; it was first connected with Vedic sacrifices, and this was lost sight of by some scholars, who have been enthralled by the intensely human interest that centred on the fight between the Kurus and the Pandavas*. In fact, the great war of Kurukshetra has been so powerfully treated in the Mahabharata that it is quite natural that the great scholars of the Mahabharata should find in it the chief theme of the original Mahabharata and treat other matters not relating to this great story as lying outside the scope of the Epic proper. The internal evidence furnished by the Mahabharata itself would dispel any such notions. It will show the exact scope and features of the original Mahabharata so clearly, that the subject is reserved for a more detailed amplification in the next chapter.

It is sufficient for the purpose of this chapter to lay stress only on the salient points overlooked by many important scholars. The

*The Mbh. Udyoga Parva, Chapter CLXI, verses 29-57

original theme of the Mahābhārata was developed in the story-telling propaganda school of a particular sect of Vedic worshippers, who used sacrifices for a higher cultural purpose, and did not relate to war or any incidents of war, but was meant for elevating the masses as well as the intelligent classes to higher spiritual realisations, and sought to effect a cultural fusion of the various races and divisions of people living in India. The stories and legends introduced in the Bharata Samhita were for inculcating moral lessons, the rituals connected with the performance of sacrifice were explained with a view to spread among the people crude medical notions of primitive age embodied in the Atharva Veda, and a higher spiritual craving was imparted to the people through instructions on Narayana worship. The duties of the four Ashramas and the duties of various castes were also promulgated in the Bharata Samhita. War, gambling, hunting and drinking were shown to be evils which result in much unhappiness. The wide range of subjects and purpose covered by the original Bharata Samhita was such, that it could not be published among all classes of people except through the performance of sacrifices on a large scale, which they were all invited to attend. The Bharata Samhita was originally intended to be as much a manual for the priests as were the Taittiriya Samhita and Catapatha Brahmana.

The Bharata Samhita, as has been shown previously, belongs to the period of the Vedic sacrifices, but its philosophy and examples are meant to indicate a new development in the ideology of the Vedic thinkers. It was composed in a period of transition and was meant to hasten the deep spiritual speculations of the Upanishads. It had not yet got free of its ritualistic entanglements, but it pointed to a higher way of attaining salvation. If the Bharata Samhita is the earliest stratum of the great Epic, it would be quite natural to infer that whatever is mentioned as having occurred in the earliest cycle belongs to the subject-matter of the Bharata Samhita.

It may be open to objection from two quarters, from those who have been bewildered by the rather contradictory nature of statements found in the Mahābhārata and those who are opposed to any theory which would place such an early date to the compilation of the Bharata Samhita. Some of the important scholars are inclined to the view that there are very early matters which have crept into the Mahābhārata, but they lie outside the scope of the Epic proper. There are other scholars, however, who believe in an earlier text represented by the Bharata Samhita, but they have not tried to find out what it was and how it was possible to transform it into its present size.

The profound Epic scholar Professor Hopkins also supports our conclusion in this matter. He also speaks of the "Anti-thesis between the old orthodoxy and the new science of thought, which not only disregards the Vedic ceremonies but condemns them" The issue is confused in the Mahabharata, but it is quite clearly brought out in the Bharata Samhita, and it is with the object of proving this contention in all its aspects that a close examination of what should be considered the texts of the Bharata Samhita becomes necessary.

If the implications and bearing of Poulama, Pousya and Astika Parvas are understood with the Narayana section of Shanti Parva along with the Shanti, Annusasana, Ashvamedha and Bana Parvas, one would get as near as possible to the original text of the Bharata Samhita, which was later on amplified in the two Epics, *viz.*, the Ramayana and the Mahabharata For this it is necessary to realise the earlier and later aspects of thought represented by the hymns of the Rigveda One would find a very close connection between these sections of the Mahabharata and the Rigveda proper—not only through the sages mentioned therein, but also a close chronological agreement between them and the period of the Rik verses

The Bharata Samhita is connected with the Samkhya system of philosophy enunciated by Kapila, who may be held to have composed the original version of the Bharata at his Ashrama in Svetadwip—probably in South Bengal In the Ramayana too one notes the individual strain belonging to an earlier period when Valmiki wrote his Epic on the bank of the Tamasa It is necessary, therefore, to dwell more fully on the Ashrama-like which is portrayed so powerfully in the Pousya Parva, for not only is it a part and parcel of the Bharata Samhita, but it has influenced great Indian modern thinkers like the Indian Poet Laureate Tagore, and the late Swami Dayananda, to revive this system in the educational centres with which their names are so prominently connected It is something like a revival of pre-Raphaelitism in India

The university life, so rich in its varied complexities and so deeply interconnected with the complex modern life, was a heritage of the Vedic schools of thought in the later phase. Buddhism made full use of this system and under the patronage of kings and emperors they founded, on similar lines, their famous universities such as those of Nalanda, Takshashila and Vikramashila, etc No student of Indian culture should ignore the importance of university life developed from the simple personal contact of the sages with two or three disciples to that of Naimisharanya, with a great scholar like Saunaka as its

Chancellor, to its twelve years sacrifice, and congregation of a large number of teachers before whom the examination of students took place. This description is as important for tracing the progress of educational activities of the ancient Indians as those of the celebrated Chinese scholars Fa-hien and Itsing, who described the Nalanda University.

The whole of the Narayana section of the Mahabharata, the discourse in Shanti Parva between sages as preceptors and pupils on old religion and philosophy, like Chapters 330 and 250, definitions of God and Brahma in Chapter 237, and Hari Gita in 256, and also between God Indra and early kings and their priests Kasyapa, Bhṛigu, Vasistha, Agastya, etc., must have formed parts of the Bharata Samhita. Vyasa told his son Suka of the existence of old literature by the learned sages before he composed his famous Epic.

“I shall now describe to you duties having a very ancient origin and laid down by the Rishis, duties which are superior to all others.”

He described worldly affairs as an ocean and human life as a river whose landing stage of truth lay on the miry bank of anger, full of reptiles of lust and ambition, eddies of speeches of falsehood and deception. Men, endowed with learning, culture and wisdom, were alone able to reach the shore. Wise men considered this to be prized above all things in human life. One could free oneself from all anxieties like a snake which cast off its slough. One could see the soul within oneself with the lamp of knowledge. Seeing oneself within, one would acquire omniscience, ceasing of course to regard one's own body as oneself. Brahma has no sex—male, female or neuter. The person, irrespective of sexes, can acquire the knowledge of Brahma. The acquisition of this knowledge is described as the true liberation of soul and the question of re-birth, heaven and hell do not arise. This is the mystery of all mysteries and the very highest knowledge one can attain for one's salvation. The human soul did not know wherefrom it came and where it would go. This is the true ideal cultural worship of Nara Narayana of the recognised national India of the great Epic age. It is said that this knowledge of the all-pervading soul should be administered to a son who controlled his senses and was honest and submissive.

The ship cannot reach its destination unless the captain knows the use of the compass or follows the direction of the stars, measures the depths of the sea and takes due precaution against dangers lying below the surface of the water. Human life without a captain is sure to founder in the sea of troubles. The captain who is in the human breast should be awakened to use the compass of love to steer life.

on a right course. This is, in short, the psychology of human success in this world below to realize what is above. Fortitude is the guard and support of all [the other virtues. By looking into physical causes men's minds are opened and enlarged. Pleasure is made instrumental to the moral purpose of one's being. There is a divine message in the green fields, river-banks, the sun-beam, and moonshine, in movements of all living animals in their different modes of life and living, in building their places of rest and in following their game of hunting for their food. Glory, honour and fame are nothing but the symptoms of the infinite and progressive nature of intellect. Matter is sublime and beautiful when it is significant of mind, i.e., where pleasure is made instrumental to the moral purpose of one's being. Even the cruel serpent, whose sting means sure death, hears music with rapt attention, circles round the light and dances to the flute. Death is the only reality in life to human beasts who are engrossed in enjoyments to polish their manners and disguise their faults rather than reform the heart and set right its deformities by following the footsteps of great men or their wise instructors.

It is easy for men or women to screen themselves from the penalty of human laws, but there were no such false human beings in ancient India. Not men and women but even their gods gladly exposed their sins and crimes and took the penances or made expiations gladly. Thus it speaks for itself that the ancient Hindu laws were made, not to punish the law-breakers, but were the self-imposed punishment of expiation for trivial and technical offence, which law-givers committed in their youth and which were justly sought to be overlooked by kings.

Indian history as treated in the Epics and Puranas may often err on the side of extravagance, but it would leave us in a vacuum if all the materials available in them are dismissed as fabulous. Western scholars are now realising that some historical facts may be gleaned from them. The difficulty of interpreting the mass of legends embodied in Indian historical traditions may often dismay a research scholar in this difficult task, but if Indian history is to be resuscitated from oblivion, the task should not be shirked.

The Puranas and the Epics divide the chronology of Indian history into 11 cycles of Manu; facts are systematically grouped under each of these epochs of early Indian history. Each epoch is not of fabulous duration, but perhaps consisted of some definite period marked off from the rest by certain features of culture. In the Mahabharata, historical accounts are given from the first cycle of Manu (Svayambhuva Manu) to the 7th cycle (Vaivasvat Manu). The Bharata Samhita was origi-

nally a theological dissertation on Narayana which came later on to be enlarged into the present Mahabharata, and therefore the view which the learned professor holds about the Narayana section of Shanti Parva as lying outside the scope of the Epic proper might be true if by the Epic is meant the story of the war between Kurus and Pandavas, but the same cannot be said about its relation to the Bharata Samhita, of which it formed the most cardinal and central theme.

It may be asked how, if the Narayana Section of the Shanti Parva formed the pivot of the Bharata Samhita, such legends as those mentioned in the Adi Parva, viz., the legend of Utamla, the fable of the elephant and tortoise, etc. and the Markendeya Section of the Bana Parva, come to be integral parts of the Bharata Samhita. The answer is that it was due to the very important fact that the Bharata Samhita came to be recited at the sacrifices and was adopted for popular use. It was necessary that people who were reached by means of story-telling should be interested. The Bharata Samhita served a multilateral purpose, and it is for this reason that its transformation into the present form was possible.

The Bharata Samhita enlightens one as to the laws and constitution of Ancient India, the power of the king and his priest, with the codes of the religion delegated to them, as it were, by God, Almighty Father. The rulers of a country or the propounders of religion may be said to be the servants of God. To personify the genius of the past age correctly one must have very different models. The picture could only emanate from a master's hand. Poets have often exhibited delightful specimens giving vivid impressions of individuals, there was nothing but sincerity and purity. The antidote to the polluting and enervating addiction to finery and voluptuousness will be found in the skilful discipline of the intellect and the cultivation of moral principles of the past. Little knowledge of the world will be discovered by attributing all failures to mere fate and misfortune. The doctrines of chance and of opportunity have grown apace in modern times. There is no spirit of contrition within the soul which will let one rest till one can do something to repair the evils of past conduct and effect a sort of reconciliation with one's heavenly as well as one's earthly father.

Earthly parents feed their children, not because they are moved by their cries, clothe them, not because they are naked. They know these necessities through selfless love. Parents have no thought, like other friends and preceptors, of a return for their good offices. They cast no oblique glances to their own interest or have reflex views on themselves. If by all their endeavours they can obtain their child's

welfare, there is no higher object to their ambition, no better accomplishment of their wishes. The infirmities of age sit upon them who feel not the troubles of life, but those sinless at the approach of death are blessed with the idea that they will be living and honoured in the memory and person of their children and pass down to the receptacle of all the living to reap the rich harvest of all their cares and labour in the duty, affection and felicity of their dear children.

Ancient Indo-Aryan history is full of the faithful picture of parent worship which formed the religious basis of the divine worship of God Almighty, the parent of the universe. The possession of this affection is only possible when the mind is well-disciplined and well-stored. "Neither give thou Aesop's cock a gem, who would be better pleased and happier if he had a barley corn" said Lord Bacon. The ass may be dressed in a lion's skin, but it can hardly change the voice which will betray it. One must be holy before one puts on the garment of the holy wise men. Brutes fear to die out of the instinct to preserve a life of enjoyment, but men do so more on account of the day of judgment or with their thought of the next world. A pious religious man has no such fear and he dies at will in peace. This has been the ideal human death of the ancient Satya Yuga, when virtue reigned supreme.

'Man makes a death which Nature never made,
Then on the point of his own fancy falls,
And feels a thousand deaths in fearing one.' — Young

This is the essence of the Bharata Samhita and the Epic kernel of Ancient India. The faith and blessings of religion, preached in the Bharata Samhita, confer an inheritance of rest and a crown of glory. Blessed be forever that parent's children when knowledge and faith have made them all children of one God and one faith of Narayana. The Ancient Indians' National God was Narayana. All sectarian priests adored and worshipped Him as superior to all gods if not the only God. This gospel of truth is preached in the book of the Hindus called the Bharata Samhita.

In the most primitive condition of society every individual has to fight for food and drink as well as comfort, but with the growth of society the question of spiritual food became a necessary element for the growth of a nation. Kings were raised to defend the country and nation against any aggression. Laws were defined from custom in consultation with elders, and punishment began to be inflicted on transgressors. The Bharata Samhita describes the origin of spiritual instructions to Brahma, from whom self-controlled sages like Sanat-Kumar and Narada receive them while Agastya, Kapila, Bhṛigu and

Vasistha acquired perfection from their devotions and actual experience of worldly life

Professor Winternitz, in the following quotation, bears out this thesis,

"Whereas, however", he says, "the Puranas maintain a certain connection with epic poetry and are, as it were, a repertory of Indian legend poetry, the Tantras the Samhitas, the Agamas, which differ from these but slightly, rather bear the stamp of purely theological works touching the technicalities of the cult of certain sects, together with their metaphysical and mystical principles. Strictly speaking, the Samhitas are the sacred books of the Vaisnavas, the 'Agamas' those of the Sivas, and 'Tantras' those of the Sa'ktas."

Action and thought go hand in hand, one may control the limbs, but how can one stay the mutiny of thought? Memory is not always a joy for it makes grief unbearable. For, when a poor tortured creature is writhing in agony with a maddened brain from thoughts of what has been, it seems to him a kind of fresh infliction. Prayer, religion and divine concentration are the weapons with which one can conquer all those wars of mind and body to which human frailty is subjected. Particular records of facts under different circumstances can benefit the understanding of the distressed to gain strength to overcome the difficulty.

The Bharata Samhita contained the duties of the four Ashramas (stages of life)—moral lessons and philosophical truths—which enabled the wise men to conceive the great Creator of the universe. The precepts were sometimes illustrated by fables and anecdotes from traditions to enlighten the unintelligent section of the general public. It eventually became the media through which the story of the conflict between Kurus and Pandavas was almost told. It must not be lost sight of that the sacrifice had a wide and universal appeal, for it was in the schools of the Vedic sacrifices that the Bharata Samhita originated and partook of the wide outlook that one finds in the hymn whose translation is quoted below—

"May in the Brahmin community be born Brahmins possessed of the lustre of sacred knowledge and may in this state be born Kshatriyas proficient in archery, brave and great chariot warriors. May cows be milkgiving oxen able to draw, horses swift women with graceful persons and young men fond of riding chariots, desirous of winning and fit for appearing in assemblies. May this sacrificer obtain a hero son. May rain come at each time we wish for it may planets give us good crops and may there be subsistence and welfare for all of us."

The spirit of monotheism in the Narayana cult spread like wild fire and ruled every kind of Vedic god out of order. So great was its influence over all classes of men that even the foreign invaders of India could not escape it. Its ultimate phase of divine universal love in Sri Krishna, Buddha, Chaitanya, etc., was reflected in all the religions of the world.

One should clearly understand that Yajna had an earlier as well as a later phase in order to appreciate the important role which the Bharata Samhita occupied in the transition from one to the other. In fact, the change was brought about by the compilation of the Bharata Samhita. Instances can be multiplied of the performance of the Yajnas, which the kings and priests celebrated, by which they gained or tried to gain an immediate material reward. Their enemies tried their best to thwart them. It led to many sanguinary contests. The celebrated King Jarasandha of Magadha was about to complete his Naramedha Yajna, in which he was going to slaughter the chiefs whom he had brought in chains from various parts of India, and whose blood he was going to offer to the Great God Rudra-Devī, when Sri Krishna came secretly with Bhīma and Arjuna into the enclosure of the sacrifice. Bhīma killed Jarasandha under the instructions of Sri Krishna and released the imprisoned kings, who were then invited to attend the Raja-Suya sacrifice of Yudhishthira at which, however, the King Sisupala of Chedis was killed by Sri Krishna. Kamsa was slain at a sacrifice by Sri Krishna when he was invited. It was with the object of destroying the Nagas, that King Janmejaya initiated the snake or Naga sacrifice at the instance of Bhargava, but this was set at rest by the sage named Astika.

The Astika Parva, which directly bears upon the snake sacrifice undertaken by Janmejaya II, contains stories which are of great value. It helps one to find out the exact character of the earlier Samhita to which the Mahabharata owes its origin. Legends which are told in this connection show the interesting nature of the instruction conveyed to the people and bears a family likeness to similar stories found in Aesop's Fables. The famous sage Bishma Vasu could not agree to the proposal of his younger brother, Supratika, for dividing their ancestral property and cursed him to become an elephant. The younger brother, not to be outdone by the elder, also cursed his elder brother, so that he might assume the shape of a tortoise. Thus the two brothers, reborn in the forms of an elephant and a tortoise, dwelt in a tank. They could not forget their old grudge and started a great fight between themselves which caused a great noise and disturbance in the water of the tank. Garuda, the son of Kasyapa by Binata, was very hungry. He saw the two huge animals fighting with each other, seized them in his claws and flew with them to the Gandhamadana Mountains, where he made a hearty meal off them. It will be admitted that this fable contains a great moral, and, as such, it was recited at the sacrifice, and became incorporated in the Bharata Samhita.

The quarrels between Kadru and Binata, Devayani and Sarmistha, were those between co-wives, and were probably ancient historical

anecdotes. These stories illustrate on the one hand the social usages prevalent among the early Aryans, and on the other hand establish the connection of the Bharata Samhita with prominent problems of the Rig Veda, in which hymns are found on the way by which co-wives were humbled in ancient times * It cannot be overlooked that these allegorical stories also show that the reciters of the ^{author bears the stamp} meant to travel into the historical domain but ^{cult of certain sects,} confining ^{strictly speaking, to} imparting education through fables. The story of Kaurava the ^{the Sutas, etc.} which occurs in the same Parva, has a still more important historical significance. This, as will be shown later on, has an important bearing on the particular Vedic school in which the Bharata Samhita originated. But these along with the chapters on royal duties and the four stages of life, the duties of different divisions of society described in the Shanti Parva as well as in the Annusasana Parva and elsewhere, constituted the original Bharata Samhita in which Mahaparusha and Narayana occur as the prime objects of worship.

From what has been said above, it is obvious that the original Mahabharata having had its origin in the sacrificial celebrations of the ancient Indians, became in course of time an account of the war between the Kurus and Pandavas. The original Bharata Samhita had nothing to do with this theme. On the contrary, it condemned violence and advocated non-violence †. Hence almost a new God unconnected with war, diplomacy and the intrigues of such Vedic gods as Indra, Varuna and Agni then comes into prominence and eclipses the others. Narayana, said to be Vishnu, a minor Vedic God, now becomes the chief deity of the land. The Bharata Samhita did not recite the glories of the Solar or the Lunar dynasties of kings, who were not then so split up into conflicting and distinct lines. The Ramayana described the Solar dynasty of kings and specially Rama, and the Mahabharata the Lunar dynasty of kings. But one significant fact one cannot overlook is that the ancient Hindu rites and ceremonies were performed, and continue to be the same even now, according to the (tithi) dates of the Lunar month because, on the corresponding dates of the Lunar month, (i.e., on the same tithis) the constellations, the sun, the moon, the stars, etc., return to approximately the same relative positions as on the corresponding dates of the Solar month.

Time is an estate of God on which human life grows. The ancient monasteries of India proved to the world that the miracles of wisdom were far more beautiful and enjoyable than the fleeting pleasures of the

* Rig Veda 10th Mandala

† Srimadbhagbat Kanda 12, Chapter VI

senses in a country where bounteous Nature offers every opportunity for their full gratification. The sages who made an imaginary cycle of time called Manvantara, were represented as stars who performed the task of self-differentiating unity. The bird Garuda was regarded as the most powerful being, bearing as it does Narayana, the Supreme Being or the Paramatma, on its wings and fighting with Indra for the nectar. This was the prologue to the Bharata Samhita. This legend occurs in Rig 10. 114, 105 and establishes its intimate connection with the latter.

The ideal supermen of Ancient India were called Devas and their Sanskrit language and characters received the distinct epithets of Devabhāṣa and Devanāgarī, respectively. The hymns of the Vedas refer to the manifestations of Nature, which can hardly coincide with similar things in any country other than India. There is no mention of any peculiar phenomenon like the Aurora Borealis, to suggest for a moment that the Aryans' settlement was at or near the Polar regions, where that phenomenon takes place. The early Aryans were not barbarian beasts to fly or be stupefied and dumb with fear before fire or the other terrific scourges of Nature, but they prayed to be saved from them. They enlivened them with the instinctive urge to find in them the spirit of God, and invoked them with prayers, offerings and libations to propitiate Him, who alone could make them immune from the cruel operations to which no cause could be ascribed. It was thus that Varuna, the presiding deity of the Ocean, became the supreme God. There is no parallel to such a conception of God as the Vedas give in Western or in any mythology or pantheon of the world.

"There is the Varunasaman (Gram VII, I 18, composed on SV I 255, chanted on SV II 429-430. There are three samans of this name, see SV ed Calcutta, Vol I, page 447, the last of the three is Svaram) (23)"

"By means of this (saman) Varuna attained the reign, the supremacy. He who, in lauding, has applied the Varunasaman, attains the reign, the supremacy (How Varuna obtained the supremacy is set forth in the Jaim Br (III 152) 'King Varuna was (originally) the equal of the other deities. He desired, 'May I be consecrated as king over all the Gods'. He dwelled a hundred years with Prajapati as his pupil. He (Prajapati) imparted this chant to him (saying) 'Accept this royalty, this characteristic of mine, the Gods will make thee their king'. He (Varuna) went to the Gods. The Gods seeing him approaching, got up in honour of him. He said to them 'Do not ye get up in honour of me, ye are forsooth, my brothers I am your equal'. 'No' they said, 'we see on thee the characteristic of our father Prajapati', and they got up in honour of him. They put down for him the kings-seat, and, whilst he was seated on it, the Vasus consecrated him to royalty, the Rudras consecrated him to kingship, the Adityas consecrated him to supremacy, the All-gods consecrated him to sovereignty, the Maruts consecrated him to all-mightiness, the Sadhyas and Aptyas consecrated him to overlordship." See the text in das Jaim-br in Auswahl, No 188) (23)."

"(The verses beginning) 'Chant ye unto Mitra', being addressed to Heaven and Earth, (serve for) the Ajya(-laud) addressed to Mitra and Varuna. Heaven and

Parta, forsooth are the favourite resort of Mitra and Varuna, by means of their favourite resort he thus appropriates them cryptically (1) ' ' One (of these verses, beginning) 'Thee O Agni, Varuna and Mitra', is addressed to Varuna. That part of the sacrifice, which is badly performed, is seized by Varuna, thus he thereby disperses by his sacrifice (1) ' ' (The tristich beginning) 'Mitra, of holy might, I call for' is the rathantara like (ajva land) addressed to Mitra and Varuna, (5) ' 'The deities (formerly) did not yield the sovereignty to Varuna. He saw this 'Gods stand', and, thereupon, the deities yielded to him the supremacy. His (the Sacrificer's) equals yield him the superiority (30) ' ' He who knows this to his share falls the lustre of might (and) he gets a firm standing (1) ' "Lustrous (bharga) becomes he, who in lauding has applied the Bharga (saman), glorious (vasha) he, (who in lauding has applied) the Vasha (saman) (32) ' 'There is the Vasistha (saman), its brahmanna is the same (33) ' "There is the Arka of Dirgha tama, Arka is food for obtaining food (34) " "

This refers to the exact implication of Arka leaf eating which made Upamanyu blind. He fell into a well, but got back his eye-sight after he recited the Asvini Kumar hymn on the advice of his preceptor. Asvini Kumars restored the Vedic sage Upamanyu his sight as a reward for his great reverence to his preceptor. The sage Chyavana got his youth from Asvini Kumar's boon and secured oblation for them in the sacrifice, fighting with Indra for it in a sacrifice of Chyavan's father-in-law. Asvini Kumars were masters of medicine and removers of difficulties. The Devas and Sages requisitioned their services. They were friends in need and friends in deed.

The origin of Pitriyajna or ancestor worship also pre-supposes an economic advance of the community among which it is introduced. From the Vedic hymns it seems that it was connected with a knowledge of the dairy, which the Aryans learned from Panis, frequently mentioned in the Vedas. Butter and cheese, which were made out of milk, became at an early time the favourite food of the Aryans, and cows were regarded by them as the chief source of wealth. For this reason one comes across hymns on water, river and butter in the Rig-Veda. The idea underlying these being offered at the sacrifices is that the people thought that merit could be acquired by sharing them with the gods and ancestors, so that their children might enjoy them in future uninterruptedly. In the hymn of praise to the departed ancestors, Yama, who is the incarnation of Dharma (religion and rectitude) to whom they go is invoked, and the sages who are present at the sacrifices and who have come to the function to console the grief-stricken children of the deceased partake of the offerings.

The Pitriyajna, or the worship of the ancestor, may be traced to a very early period in Aryan history and hymns in the Rig Veda in connection with funeral rites must necessarily be of much earlier origin.

The hymn quoted below is of great importance, for it enables us to establish connection between the Pitriyajna and a few well-known Vedic sages who are associated with important branches of Vedic literature. The hymn runs thus —

“O Yama come and accept a seat at the Yajna, bring with thee the Fathers known as Angira. Our fathers the Angiras, Bhrigu and Atharva have come, they are entitled to drink Soma, for they wish well of us at the sacrifice, and their favours invest us with prosperity.”

Thus it is quite clear that the great sages mentioned above are very intimately associated with ancestor worship. But this Vedic hymn would tend to mystify people who were assembled at the sacrifice as to its real meaning. The Bharata Samhita, as has already been repeatedly said, is connected with the story telling which took place at the Asvamedha sacrifice and the story told on the second day of the sacrifice by the priest under the heading of Yama Vivasvan certainly refers to the story which appears in the form of an allegory in which Kama (Passion), Krodha (Anger), Kala (Time), Dharma (Piety) and Mrityu (Death) are made to appear and test the king who was willing to give and the Brahmin who refused to accept the gift at the hand of the king. The moral of this story is given below in the translation of the text bearing on the subject

‘The king said —I am a kshatriya. I do not know how to say the word ‘give’ the only thing, O best of twice born ones that we can say is, ‘Give (us) battle.’

‘The Brahmana said —You are content with the observance of the duties of your order. Likewise, I am content with the duties of mine, O king. There is, therefore, little difference between us. Do what you please.

‘The king said —You gave vent to these words first, viz —‘I shall give you according to my might. —I, therefore, pray, O twice born one, ‘Give me the fruits of this, your recitation.

‘The Brahmana said —You boasted that your words always pray for battle. Why then do you not pray for a battle with me?

‘The king said —It is said that Brahmanas are armed with the thunder of speech, and that kshatriyas have might of arms. Hence, O learned Brahmana, this wordy warfare has taken place between you and me.

‘The Brahmana said —As regards myself, this is my resolution to day. What shall I give you according to my might? Tell me, O king of kings, and I shall give you. Do not delay.

‘The king said —If, indeed, you wish to give me anything, then give me the fruits you have acquired by practising recitation for these thousand years.

‘The Brahmana said —Take the greatest fruit of the recitations I have practised, indeed take half, without any hesitation the entire fruits of all recitation. Or, O king, if you desire, take without any hesitation the entire fruits of my recitations.

‘The king said —Blessed be you, I have no necessity for the fruits of your recitations which I have begged. Blessings on your head. I am about to leave you. Tell me, however, what those fruits are.

"The Brahmana said —I have no knowledge of the fruits I have acquired. I have, however, given you those fruits that I have acquired by recitation. These, viz., Dharma and Time and Yama, and Mrityu, are witnesses.

"The king said —What will the fruits, which are not known, of these your observances do for me? If you do not tell me what are the fruits of your recitations, let those fruits be yours, for, forsooth, I do not wish for them.

"The Brahmana said —I will not accept any other word (from you). I have given you the fruits of my recitations. Let, O royal sage, both your words and mine prove true. As regards my recitations, I never entertained any particular desire to do. How then, O foremost of kings, should I have any knowledge of what are the fruits of those recitations? You said, 'Give!' I said, 'I give.' I shall not falsify these words. Keep the truth. Be calm. If you refuse to keep my word O king great sin of untruth will visit you. O chastiser of foes, you should not utter what is untrue. Likewise, I dare not falsify what I have said. I have before this unhesitatingly said, 'I give!' If, therefore, you are firm in truth accept my gift. Coming here, O king, you begged of me the fruits of my recitations. Therefore take what I have given away, if, indeed, you are truthful. He who is given to falsehood has neither this world nor the next. Such a person cannot rescue his departed manes. How again shall he succeed in doing good to progeny? The rewards of sacrifices and gifts, as also of fasts and religious observances, are not so powerful in rescuing as truth, O foremost of men, in both this and the next world. All the penances that have been practised by you and all those that you will practise in the future for hundreds and thousands of years are not more efficacious than truth. Truth is the one undecaying Brahma. Truth is the one undecaying Penance. Truth is the one undecaying Sacrifice. Truth is the one undecaying Veda. Truth is awake in the Vedas. The fruits attached to truth have been described as the highest. From truth originate Righteousness and Self control. Everything depends on truth.

"Truth is the Vedas and their branches. Truth is knowledge. Truth is the Ordinance. Truth is the observance of vows and fasts. Truth is the Prime Syllable Om. Truth is the origin of creatures. Truth is their progeny. It is by truth that the Wind moves. It is by truth that the Sun gives heat. It is by truth that Fire burns. It is on truth that Heaven rests. Truth is Sacrifice, Penance, Vedas, the verses of Samans, Mantras, and Saraswati. We have heard that once on a time truth and all religious observances were weighed in a scale. When both were weighed that scale on which truth was, proved heavier. There is truth where Righteousness is. Everything multiplies through truth. Why, O king, do you wish to do false act. Be firm in truth. Do not act falsely, O king. Why do you falsify the words 'Give (me) which you have said?' If you refuse, O king, to accept the fruits that I have given you of my recitations, you shall then have to wander over the world fallen away from Righteousness. That person who does not give after having promised, and he also that does not accept after having begged, are both stained with falsehood. You should not, therefore, falsify your own words.

"The King said —To fight and to protect, form the duties of Kshatriyas. It is said that Kshatriyas are givers. How then shall I take anything from you?

"The Brahmana said —I never pressed you, O king. I did not seek your house. Yourself, coming here you yourself begged of me. Why then do you not take?

"Dharma said —Know you both that I am Dharma himself. Let there be no dispute between you. Let the Brahmana possess the reward of gift, and let the king also obtain the merit of truth.

"Heaven said —Know, O great king, that I am Heaven's self-incarnate, come here in person. Let this dispute between you cease. You are both equal in respect of the merit or rewards that you have acquired.

"The King said.—I have no use with Heaven Go, O Heaven, to the place you have come from. If this learned Brahmana wishes to go to you, let him take the rewards that I have acquired

"The Brahmana said —In my boyhood I had, through ignorance, stretched my hand for accepting gifts Now, however, I recite the Gayatri, observing the duty of abstention Why do you, O king, tempt me thus, me who have for a long time followed the duty of abstention? I shall myself do what my duty is I do not wish to participate in the rewards acquired by you, O king I am given to penances and to the study of the Vedas, and I have abstained from acceptance

"The King said —If, O Brahmana, you are really prepared to give me the excellent reward of your recitation, then let half that reward be mine, you also take at the same time half the reward that I myself have gained by my acts Brahmanas follow the duty of acceptance Persons born in the royal order follow the duty of giving If you are not unaware of the duties, let our fruits be equal Or, if you do not wish to be my equal regarding our rewards, take then the whole of the rewards that I may have gained Do take merit I have gained if you wish to show me favour

"Bhisma continued —'At this time two very ugly persons came there Each had his arm upon the other's shoulder, both were ill-dressed They said these words —(You owe me nothing) I really owe you!—If we dispute in this way, here is the king, who governs men

I say truly, you owe me nothing You speak falsely

"I owe you a debt" Both of them, greatly exercised in dispute, then addressed the king, saying,—'See, O king, that none of us may be visited by sin!'

"Virupa said —I owe my companion Vikrita, O king, the merits of the gift of a cow I am willing to satisfy that debt This Vikrita, however, refuses to accept repayment

"Vikrita said —This Virupa, O king, owes me nothing He speaks an untruth under the appearance of truth, O king

"The King said —Tell me, O Virupa, what is that which you owe your friend here I wish to first hear you and then do what is proper

"Virupa said —Hear attentively, O king, all the circumstances fully about how I owe my companion, viz., this Vikrita, O king This Vikrita had, in days gone by, for the sake of acquiring merit, O sinless one, given away an auspicious cow, O royal sage, to a Brahmana given to penances and the study of the Vedas Going to him, O king, I begged of him the reward of that act With a pure heart, Vikrita made a gift to me of that reward I then, for my purification, did some good acts I also bought two Kapila cows with calves, both of which used to give large quantities of milk. I then presented, according to due rites and with proper devotion, those two cows to a poor Brahmana living by picking solitary grains Having formerly accepted the gift from my companion, I wish, O Lord, even here, to give him in return twice the reward. The circumstances being such O foremost of men, who amongst us two shall be innocent and who guilty? Disputing with each other about this, we have both come to you, O king Whether you judge rightly or wrongly, settle our dispute and put us in peace If this my companion does not wish to take from me in return a gift equal to what he gave me, you shall have to judge patiently and put us both on the right road

"The King said —Why do you not accept payment that is sought to be made for the debt that he owes to you? Do not delay, but accept payment of what you know, to be your due !

'Vikrita said —This one says that he owes me. I tell him that what I gave I gave away. He does not, therefore, owe me anything. Let him go wherever he likes.

'The King said —He is ready to give you. You are, however, reluctant to take. It does not appear proper to me! I think you should be punished for this. There is little doubt in this.

'Vikrita said —I made a gift to him, O royal sage! How can I take it back? If I am guilty in this, do you declare the punishment, O Powerful one.

'Virupa said —If you refuse to take when I am ready to give, this king will, forsooth, punish you, for he is an upholder of justice.

'Vikrita said, —Begged by him I gave him what was my own. How shall I now take it back? You may go away. I permit you.

'The Brahmana said —You have heard, O king, the words of the other two. Do you take unhesitatingly what I have promised to give you.

'The King said —This subject is, indeed, as deep as an unfathomable pit. How will the tenaciousness of this heater end? If I do not take what has been given by this Brahmana, how shall I avoid being polluted with a great sin?

'The royal sage then said to the two disputants —Having acquired your respective objects, go you both. I should see that kindly duties which are in me, may not become useless. It is settled that kings should follow the duties sanctioned for them. To my misfortune, however, the course of duties laid down for Brahmanas has affected my wretched self.

'The Brahmana said —Accept, O king! I owe you. You begged it of me, and I also have promised. If, however, you refuse to take, O king I shall forsooth curse you.

'The King said —Lie on royal duties, the fixed action of which is ever such! I should, however, take what you give only for making the two sorts of duty exactly equal. This my hand, that was never before extended, is now stretched forth. Give me what you owe me.

'The Brahmana said —If I have acquired any fruits by reciting the Gayatri, accept them all.

'The King said —These drops of water, see, O foremost of Brahmanas, have fallen upon my hand. I also wish to give you. Accept my gift. Let us both stand equal.

'Virupa said —Know, O king, that we two are Desire and Anger. We have induced you to act thus! You have made a gift in return to the Brahmana. Let there be equality between you and this twice born one regarding blessed regions in the next world. This Vikrita really does not owe me anything. We appealed to you for your own sake. Time, Dharma, Mrityu, and we two, have examined everything about you, here in your very presence by creating this quarrel between you and that Brahmana. Go now as you like, to those regions of happiness which you have acquired by means of your deeds.

'Bhishma said —I have now told you how reciters win the fruits of their Recitation and what, indeed, is their object, what the place and what the regions, that a Reciter may acquire. A Reciter of Gayatri goes to the Supreme God Brahman, or to Agni or enters the region of Surya. If he plays there in his new form, then stupefied by such attachment, he is affected by the attributes of those particular regions. He is equally affected if he goes to Soma, or Vayu or Earth or Space. The fact is, he lives in all these, with attachment, and shows the attributes peculiar to those regions. If, however, after having freed himself from attachments, he goes to those regions and does not trust the happiness he enjoys and wishes for that which is

Supreme and Immutable, he then enters even that. In that case he acquires the ambrosia of ambrosia, to a state free from desire and individual consciousness. He becomes Brahma's self, freed from the influence of the pairs of opposites, happy, tranquil, and without pain. Indeed, he acquires that state which is free from pain, which is tranquil which is called Brahma, whence there is no return, and which is called the One and Immutable. He becomes free from the four means of perception viz., Direct knowledge (through the senses), Revelation, Inference, and Intuition, the six conditions (Hunger, Thirst, Grief, Delusion, Disease, and Death), and also the other six and ten attributes viz., five breaths, the ten senses and the mind. Transcending the Creator (Brahman), he becomes at one with the One Supreme Soul. Or if moved by attachments, he does not wish for such absorption, but wishes to have a separate existence depending on that Supreme Cause of everything then he gets the fruition of all his desires. Or, if he hates all regions of happiness, which have been called hells, he then driving off desire and freed from everything, enjoys supreme happiness even in those very regions. Thus, O King, I have described to you about the end acquired by Reiter. I have told you everything. What else do you wish to hear from me? "

The Bharata Samhita has a two-fold interest. Having its origin in the sacrificial school of the priests, it served the purpose of a popular manual for the priests; and secondly, it was a compendium of two great Epics the Ramayana and the Mahabharata, which occupy such an important and almost all-embracing part in Indian literature. In its sacrificial aspects it is connected with the Panchaya Yajna of the twice born, and the public sacrifices performed by the kings at the instance of the priests. In this respect, the story of the Mahabharata, which was foisted on the Bharata Samhita, has a more direct sacrificial connection, whereas the story of the Ramayana is closely connected with exorcism and magic, which belong to the Atharva Veda proper. The Bharata Samhita is connected with Vedic lore and with the Vedic sages, and the names of such Vedic sages as composed Vedic hymns must be given precedence in the compilation of the Bharata Samhita over those who are prominently mentioned in connection with the narration of the Mahabharata, such as Saunaka and Sauti. Saunaka and Sauti belong to an altogether later period in the evolution of Vedic culture and education. The cultural and educational phases represented in the Bharata Samhita are admitted by Western scholars like Lassen, Hopkins, Oldenburgh, etc., to belong to an earlier period. The Vedic sacrifices, then, were truly the great connecting link between the ruler and the ruled, between the king and the Brahmans on the one hand and the celebrated sages, the teachers of the whole community and whose reputation had travelled beyond the confines of their own countries, on the other. They were marked by a huge concourse of men from all the important communities of the land who became unified in culture by means of these sacrifices. The pale of Aryan

culture was widened by these sacrifices, for people not belonging ethnically to the Aryan stock received the benefit of Aryan education. They were instructed in the rules of the right conduct of life appropriate to their respective professions. Hence the performance of a sacrifice, which entailed a very heavy expenditure on the kings, was regarded as an essential sign of a successful and prosperous reign, and a triumphant achievement of Aryan culture.

In the introductory portions of the Mahabharata a short outline of the contents of the Epic are given. The main purpose for which the Epic was composed, evidently by interpolation, was the celebration of the Great War, but in the summary given in the 1st Chapter of Anukramanika, a brief outline of the contents of the Bharata Samhita is given and in this no mention is made of the internecine strife between the Kurus and the Pandavas. It was said to be a sort of Upanishad converted into a Purana, (which does not mean history) composed by Veda Vyasa to console grief-stricken King Dhritarastra. The contents of the Bharata Samhita are outlined in this connection. This portion is so important that it is quoted below with a view to ascertain the real nature of the work which is so very often misunderstood and misinterpreted.

"In this Bharata sinless and immaculate Devas, Devarghis, and Brahmanas have been described as well as Yakshas and Great Nagas.

"In it also has the possessor of six attributes, the eternal Vasudeva, been described. He is true and just, pure and holy.

"In it is described the eternal Brahma, the great true light whose great and divine deeds the wise and the learned men declare.

"From whom has been produced the non-existent and existent, and non-existent universe with the principle of reproduction and progression, birth and death and rebirth.

"In it has also been described He who is Adhyatma, and who partakes the attributes of the five elements and He to whom unmanifested and other such words can not be applied.

"And also He whom the Yogis possessed of meditation and Tapa behold in their hearts as the reflection of an image in a mirror. The man of faith ever devoted, ever employed in the exercise of virtue, is freed from sin on reading this chapter of the Bharata, etc."

Now this quotation from the current Mahabharata leaves no room to doubt what was its true kernel. The main theme having had its origin in the story-telling at the time of sacrifice, swerved in the direction of a theological treatise of a popular nature. It originated in the Vedic schools of sacrifice and contained an exposition of the doctrines and practices of the Vedas, and in its theological side it had a great connection with the protestant school of the Kshatriyas, in

which discussions took place about Atman and Paramatman, and which challenged the materialism of the Brahmins as leading nowhere

"The relationship of the Matsya Purana to the great Epic and its supplementary book, as sources", Professor Macdonell says, "is similarly intimate. (p 300)"

The same Purana contains in the 13th Adhyaya (Chapter) a very valuable piece of information, which is that the famous Rama, the invincible slayer of Ravana, and his brothers were the worshippers of Narayana, and Valmiki, a descendant of Bhrigu, is the author of the Ramayana. The careful Western students of the Epics hold the view that the Uttarakanda cannot originally have formed part of the Ramayana. This seems to be reasonable. The story of the renowned ancestor of Jamadagni (Parashu Rama) is given in the Paulama Parva and elsewhere in the Mahabharata; but the legend may be considered an enlargement on a new basis of the simple theme of the Bharata Samhita. It should be noticed in this connection that the story of Paulama, as one has it in this version, is not the same as it occurs in the Uttarakanda, and from the conflicting nature of the legends that are grouped round Bhrigu, the ancestor of the matricide and Kshatriya slayer, the different transformations through which this legend passed are evident.

The genesis of the ancient Epic may be remembered to have originated from causes of difference between Devas and Asuras for the possession of wealth, property, beautiful women or ambrosia. This is the Bharata Samhita, the first original source of the two Epics of India, where the fights between Devas and Asuras, monarchs and kings, and priests and disciples were described. In Epic India gods fell and men rose, Asuras befriended the martial kings by marriage alliances. Indra, after killing Britta, was guilty of the crime of infidelity and could not occupy the throne of heaven, but King Nahusa occupied it through his merit, his good rule and virtuous conduct. He in turn fell from heaven when he became a slave to passions through enjoyment, then Indra again occupied his seat by good conduct and expiation. Good conduct and piety transform a man into a god and even the God of gods, if He transgressed, was not exempt from punishment. This is the lesson of life which the Bharata Samhita sought to teach. Yayati, the son of Nahusa, when in heaven, thought much of him, was condemned and was rescued by the good company of his own descendants whom he met at the time of his fall.

The sacrificial rites of the Vedas practised by the Asuras and demons like Britta and Ravana for individual benefit was soon found to be disastrous as giving power to ambitious men for their own self-gratification. The sages like Agastya, Bhrigu and Kapila first used the

spiritual powers to destroy or curb them and those accounts found a place in the Bharata Samhita. The Uttarakanda Ramayana mentions Ravana's victory over Kubera and fall before Kāpila, and those portions of the Mahabharata which describe the fall of Nahusa, Kalkeya and Batapi through Agastya and Bhṛigu, belong to the Bharata Samhita. In the Bhārata the divinity is concentrated in one Narayana. This spiritual history of evolution and concentration, called Aikāntic religion, was first traced in the Bharata Samhita. The Epic poem is of all poetical works the most difficult. The modern critics find the Western Epics fall short of their standard. The Western definition of the Epic is very important.

'Beeton's Dictionary of Universal Information' says — 'Epic poetry (epik Gr., Epos, a discourse or narrative), is a kind of poetry which has outward objects for its subjects, and is thus distinguished from lyric poetry, which deals with the inner feelings and emotions of the mind. The distinction is general, for there are few productions to which it can strictly apply, but they belong to the one class or the other, according to the predominating character. The earliest specimens of this form of art probably consisted of simple tales rhythmically arranged and recited to a very simple musical accompaniment. The longer and more artistic epic poems, however, embrace an extensive series of events and the actions of numerous personages. The Epic poetry of the early Greeks naturally divides itself into two classes—the heroic or romantic epos of Homer and the ætæatic epos of Hesiod, the one dealing with the political, the other with the religious life of the Greeks. The 'Illiad' and 'Odyssey' of Homer present us with the finest specimens of this class of poetry that have ever appeared. The sacred poetry of Hesiod partakes very much of a lyrical character. The 'Aeneid' of Virgil is not equal to the 'Illiad' of Homer as an Epic, its superiority depending more on beauty of language and arrangement than on anything in the story. The greatest Epic of modern times is the 'Paradise Lost' of Milton. Dante's 'Divine Comedy', however sublime in style, is destitute of that unity of event or action necessary to constitute a great work of this class. The 'Jerusalem Delivered' of Tasso is regularly and strictly an Epic, and adorned with all the beauties that belong to this species of composition. The Epic poem is of all poetical works the most dignified, and, at the same time, the most difficult in execution, and hence it is that so very few have succeeded in the attempt to produce a really great Epic.' (Pages 792-3)

The authorship of Vyasa and Valmiki of the Indian Epics suffered in the different editions at the hands of editors, compilers and rhapsodists from age to age, till the plots and characters descended almost to dramatic fiction. The idea that good deeds which go unrewarded here will be recognised in the next world with better life and prosperity received enormous development. The terrors of the lower world, the fire of hell and the tortures of the inferna are depicted in the last act of the Mahabharata, being meant to scare evil-doers. The beloved wife Draupadi, for whom the great fight took place, fell and died, but the ideal Yudhisthira did not look at her or utter a word of sorrow for her; this is the lesson of life the great Epic teaches—what is divine or god-

like in man. Mortal man ripens like a corn and springs up again like a corn. A man, free from the stings of desires and grief, sees the majesty of the soul inside the heart and exults at meeting with that in the universe where mother, father, wife and all unite in their deaths. Yudhishthira went to heaven in person as victor of the spiritual war in the life below, a favour which Arjuna, the real victor of the Great War of Kurukshetra, could not secure for himself though called Nara Narayana, Krishna being called Narayana the principal adviser and director of the Great War. Even the hero of the Ramayana could not ascend to heaven in person.

Mythology represents the mental background of the people of the later Rig Vedic age. Men used to attach much importance to and place great faith in re-birth. The battle of ten kings in which Sudasa Parjavana met his doom for his haughtiness (Manu VII 41) is mentioned in the Rig Veda where it is said that Sudasa Parjavana fought the Bharata. There is also mention of the fights with Sambarana and with the Panchala king. In the first he was defeated and fled, and in the second, with the help of Vasistha, he recovered his kingdom. Vasistha is the priest of the Solar dynasty of kings and Visvamitra that of the Videhas, and they were more or less concerned with all the incidents of these Epics. Vasistha was connected with the victory of Sambarana and perhaps with his matrimonial alliance with the Ikshaku family and with his giving battle to the Sudas king and with the ten kings successfully. The most famous Rajarsi Arkadanta was the Somaka Sahadevyia of the Mahabharata. He became so famous by performing sacrifices that the general public thought that the great ancestor of the Kaurova and Panchals was re-born in Somaka, who was invested with the title of Arkadanta. His lineal descendants were lost. Nila of Puranas and Nipa of Harivamsa are said to have descended from him. Likewise Devapi's line is not known. From the distinguished line of Arkadanta, Draupadi, the great heroine of the mythological and dramatic Mahabharata, and Dristadyumna descended.

The mythology of India is a very difficult subject—it is neither the false glory of heroic poetry nor the inflated pride of ancient philosophy. It is an attempt to develop and explain abstract ideas of religion, philosophy and love by putting them into the garb of concrete examples of humanity in the progress of time and advancement. It has been the product of the highly developed and concentrated Indo-Aryan mind of the growing ages of the past. True felicity is not to be derived from external possessions but from real wisdom, which consists in the proper exercise of knowledge and virtue. Humility is the attribute of great

and noble minds and presumption is the associate of ignorance. Books cannot teach anybody anything unless one makes an independent observation and endeavours to find the hidden truth behind the simple account. To create this curiosity in men, mythology grew up. The learned and the wise always record their experience from the results of their observations in the accounts of the glorious past. That one must penetrate beyond the surface of things into the hidden treasures is the aim of Hindu mythology.

In ordinary history man is remembered by his birth and deeds, but in religious history it is not so. In it a man finds a place if he has brought to light the life of the soul and what is infinite in man and in all the universe, and its immortality gives cultural re-birth as an integral part of religious history. The ancient Hindus called themselves *Dvija* or *Aryan*, and those who were not blessed with the religious birth were *Dasas* or non-Aryans. It was not a question of colour or creed or anything else. It must be said that the great Epic is not the history of the Kuru-Panchal or Pandava fight as Western scholars and Eastern students take it, but it was, in fact, the spiritual fight of the souls of men who were called blind, inert, fragile, against the perfect, loving, dutiful, heroic and beautiful. Yudhishthira reflected the perfect soul, Sri Krishna the loving-soul of the Universe, Arjuna the dutiful, Bhishma the heroic and Draupadi the beautiful soul against the blind soul of Dhritarastra, inert soul of Duryodhana and fragile soul of Karna. The hero of the Mahabharata is neither Sri Krishna, nor Arjuna, nor Bhishma, but Yudhishthira, the incarnation of virtue and truth. This is the theme of the great Epic of India.

The little vanity, like a sunspot, that there must be in a perfect man like Yudhishthira, is condemned by Sri Krishna in clear terms after the war which was his sight of hell—what the poet author represented in the Mahaprasthan Parva. The real incidents in the history of the war, both spiritual and actual, are told by Krishna in the Asvamedha Parva. Sri Krishna's words to Yudhishthira should be written in letters of gold —

“All crookedness of heart brings on destruction, and all rectitude leads to Brahma. This and this only is the aim and object of all true wisdom, what can mental distraction do (to him). Your Karma has not yet been destroyed nor have your enemies been subjugated, for you do not yet know the enemies that live within your own body.”

Sri Krishna recites what is better than his lesson in the Gita to Arjuna in the war of Indra-Brita. The annotator Nilkantha speaks very highly of the spiritual lesson of the Asvamedha Parva, where Sri

* The Mahabharata, Chapter XI, Asvamedha Parva, page 13, Slokas 4 and 5, (M. N. Dutt's English Translation).

Krishna gave the true history of the Great War, as witnessed by him, to his father. It is worth mentioning here those portions of the description which will belie the versions of the rhapsodists.—

“The battle between the Kurus and the Pandavas went on for ten days. It was so dreadful as to make one's hair stand erect. Bhishma of Kuru's race became the Commander in chief, having eleven divisions of the Kaurava princes under his command, like Vasava of the celestial forces. Highly intelligent Shikhandin, protected by the blessed Arjuna, became the leader of the seven divisions of the sons of Pandu. Then Shikhandin, in great battle, helped by the holder of Gandiva, killed, with innumerable arrows, the son of Ganga, fighting bravely. Lying on a bed of arrows, Bhishma waited like an ascetic till the sun, leaving his southward path, entered on his northerly course, when that hero died. Then Drona, that foremost of all persons conversant with arms, that greatest of men under Durjodhana, like Kavya himself of the lord of the Daityas, became the Commander-in-chief. That foremost of twice-born persons, ever boasting of his prowess in battle, was supported by the residue of the Kaurava-army consisting then of nine Aukshaubhinis, and protected by Kripa and Brisha and others. Dhrishtadyumna, familiar with many powerful weapons, and gifted with great intelligence, became the leader of the Pandavas. He was protected by Bhima like Varuna protected by Mitra. That great hero, always desirous of comparing his strength with Drona, supported by the Pandava army, and recollecting the wrongs inflicted (by Drona) on his father (Drupada, the king of the Panchalas) performed great feats in battle. In that battle between Drona and the son of Prishata, the kings assembled from various realms were nearly rooted out. That furious battle lasted for five days. At the conclusion of that period, Drona, exhausted, succumbed to Dhrishtadyumna. After that, Karna became the Commander-in-chief of Durjodhana's forces. He was supported in battle by the residue of the Kaurava army, which numbered five Aukshaubhinis. The Suta's son Karna, though a dreadful warrior, encountering Partha, came to his end on the second day, like an insect encountering a burning fire. Then, in the great battle that took place, the royal son of Dhritrashtra was killed by Bhimasena, after displaying his great prowess, in the presence of many kings.*”

The quotation exposes the hollowness of the unjust charges of unlawful tactics practised by the Pandavas on the battlefield.

“In this frail life are worthy to be blest
Held glorious and immortal when at rest”

Rama and Krishna, Sita and Radha receive the greatest adoration in the religion of the Hindus. The two beautiful ideal princesses, Sita and Draupadi, are original and unique characters in the Epic world. Epics describe the death and destruction of great kings and kingdoms for selfish worldly love. The Indian Epics go further than this. They describe religious worship, morality, law, national pride and civilization, and present ideal examples of filial, parental, conjugal, fraternal love and friendship ripening in a true love of self-sacrifice and transcending into divine love, the essence of religion and nationality in Ancient India. All of them descended from the well-known families of Vedic India,

*The Mahabharata Chapter LX, Asramedha Parva, page 72 (M. N. Dutt's English Translation). Verses 10, 8-9, 11—19, 21 and 30

the Yadavas, the Kurus and Panchals as well as the Ikshvaks. This speaks of the age of the Indian Epics.

The Mahabharata and the Ramayana have fascinated the greatest scholars of the day all over the world. It has been admitted by the greatest Western Sanskrit scholars, like the late lamented Professor Max Muller, that no Epic of the world can approach the Indian Epics both in conception and execution. The Mahabharata, notwithstanding its unwieldy mass and alleged inconsistency, is one of the grandest and greatest Epics of the world. Superficial reading will not make anyone realise its beauty. It demands an extensive and thorough knowledge of ancient civilisation and its growth from Sanskrit literature and philosophy. The Ramayana is not so difficult as the Mahabharata as will appear from the fact that the former has no commentator. The Mahabharata has many commentators, and amongst them Nilkantha seems to have been the latest and most revered and authoritative. He has not annotated every section of the Mahabharata but only dealt with the most important and their respective relations one with another.

It is indeed regrettable that Western scholars have not studied the different views of these annotators or even Nilkantha, but were simply carried away by their own imagination and made deductions or findings according to their own angle of vision. East is East and West is West, like the Poles asunder, and so very different that they cannot meet. The Vedas mention the names of Pururad, Santanu and Devapi, and the Mahabharata adds the names of their descendants, whose names have now passed into familiar Indian proverbs which convey easily to the mass the clear, unequivocal implications their names signify in common parlance even now. Dhritarashtra and Pandu, Bidura and Bhishma, Yudhishthira and Duryodhana, Arjuna and Karna, Bhima and Sakuni, Sri Krishna and Balarama, Kunti, Gandhari, Draupadi, Subhadra and Satyawati have been the moving spirits and centre of attraction in the Mahabharata, as Rama, Ravana, Bharata, Bhavisana, Lakshmana, Kakeyi and Sita have been in the Ramayana. Dasaratha and Meghnada are the great sacrifices on the altar of worldly love of a father and a son, which certainly speaks of a later age than the Mahabharata.

There is no commentator of the Ramayana, which proves that nothing difficult was found which required the help of a commentator. No one can blame Western Sanskrit scholars for all the adverse criticism they so gratuitously offered on so hard a work, requiring so many commentators in the land of its birth and confused and enlarged at the time of alien Governments, when the question of Hinduism and Hindu scripture were left to the mercy of cruel times, and foreign invasions and misrepresentation. They expressed their honest convictions with-

out thinking for a moment that they would thus be betraying their ignorance and lack of necessary information on the subject

"The poem in its present form absolutely takes the part of the Pandavas, and describes the Pandavas as not only brave beyond measure, but also as noble and good, and on the other hand represents the Kauravas as treacherous and mischievous,—the poem, in remarkable self-contradiction, relates that all the heroes of the Kauravas fall through treachery or in unfair fight. It is still more striking that all the treachery emanates from Kṛṣṇa, that he is always the instigator of all the deceit and defends the conduct of the Pandavas. In the mouths of these bards those alterations were then undertaken which made the Pandavas appear in a favourable light and the Kauravas in an unfavourable one, without its being possible to eradicate completely the original tendency of the songs. In our Mahabharata, the nucleus of the Epic, the description of the great battle is placed in the mouth of Sanjaya, the charioteer of Dhritarastra, that is, in the mouth of the bard of the Kauravas. It is precisely in these battle scenes that the Kauravas appear in the most favourable light. The whole Mahabharata, on the other hand, is recited, according to the frame-story contained in Book I, by Vyasa's pupil, Vaiṣampayana at the snake sacrifice of Janmejoṃ. This Janmejoṃ, however, is regarded as a descendant of the Pandava Arjuna, which agrees well with the fact that, in the Mahabharata as a whole, the Pandavas are preferred to the Kauravas."

It will be seen that Janmejoṃ himself had misgivings, like the Western scholars, and called upon Vyasa to clear the points, and this formed the nucleus of the Mahabharata. There is hardly any justification for making reckless and wrong allegations against the Pandavas when the bard Sanjaya, of the opposite camp, king Dhritarastra and Gandhārī spoke in favour of the Pandavas. The translations of the texts about the version related herein will speak for themselves —

"Sanjaya said —Alas, as I have seen everything with my own eyes, I shall tell you all. Hear me patiently. Great indeed is your fault. O king, these lamentations of yours are as useless as the construction of embankments when the waters have receded from a flooded field. O foremost of the Bharatas, do not indulge in grief. The decrees of Destiny are wonderful and inevitable. O foremost of the Bharatas, do not give way to grief, for these things are not unique. If in days gone by, you had prevented Kuntī's son Yudhiṣṭhira or your own sons, from the tournament at dice, then this calamity would not have overtaken you. If, again, on the eve of the battle, you had prevented the enraged parties from joining in the battle, then this calamity would not have overtaken you. If, again, you had previously induced the other Kurus to put an end to the existence of the refractory Durjodhana, then this calamity would never have overtaken you. If, indeed, you had done one of these alternatives, then the Pandavas, the Panchalas, the Vṛishnis, and the other rulers of earth had never had the reason for blaming you for your perverted understanding. If, again, doing the duty of a father, you had (by directing Durjodhana on the path of virtue) compelled him to follow in the same path, then this calamity would never have befallen you. You are the wisest man on the face of the earth. But in spite of your being so, you accepted the counsel of Karna, Durjodhana and Sakuni, abandoning the ways of eternal virtue. Therefore, O king, all these lamentations of yours that I have heard,—you who are absorbed in the enjoyment of worldly objects—appear to me like honey mixed

* Dr Winternitz's "A History of Indian

with poison. In days gone by, Krishna did not hold king Yudhishthira the son of Pandu, or Bhishma, or Drona, in so high an estimation as he did hold you, O king. But when he came to know you fallen from the duties of royalty that time forward, he did not respect you as before. When your sons applied harsh epithets to the sons of Pritha, you assumed an indifferent attitude. The result of that indifference of yours has now overtaken you—you who long to see your sons installed on the throne. O sinless one, the royalty you inherited from your forefathers, is now going to slip off your hands, or on the other hand, you will have it obtaining it from the sons of Pritha (who would certainly snatch it away from your sons after slaying them). The dominions of the Kurus and their fame, had been required by Pandu, and the right-behaving sons of Pandu have again added to that fame and those dominions. All those endeavours of theirs became fruitless when indeed their interests clashed with yours inasmuch as they were despoiled of their ancestral sovereignty by your very avaricious self. So O king the fact of your attributing blame to your sons at the time of the actual warfare and the fact of your expatiating on their faults, indeed, seem very unbecoming.*

"Then did the daughter of king Surala afraid of the extinction of her race, say out of anger these words which were virtuous and conducive to the benefit of her inhuman and wicked-souled son Durjodhana in the midst of these kings. "Let these rulers of the earth who have entered this royal council as also these regenerate Rishis and all others in this council hear what I am going to say about the sin committed by yourself O wretch and your ministers and followers. The kingdom is obtainable by us in a certain fixed order this has been the custom with our race, but you, O you of sinful intellect and of very inhuman deeds, desire unjustly to ruin the kingdom of the Kurus. The wise Dhritarastra is now established on the throne and under him as a subordinate is Vidura of great foresight; superseding these two how can you O Durjodhana desire the kingdom out of folly? The king himself and Vidura of great soul are, so long as Bhishma is alive, but his subordinates in fact, owing to his being conversant with virtue, the one born of the river (Ganga), that foremost of kings does not desire the kingship. This kingdom, incapable of being subjugated belongs to Pandu and now his sons are lords over it and none (else). This entire kingdom coming from their father goes to the sons of Pandu, and to their sons and grandsons. What that foremost among the Kurus, that great-souled one of divine vows ever attached to truth endowed with intelligence, says, should in its entirety, be done by us, for the sake of our kingdom and the duties of our order. Let this ruler of men as also Vidura by the command of the one of great vows speak the same thing that is an act that should be done by our well-wishers who should place virtue above all consideration. Let the son of Dharma Yudhishthira rule over the kingdom of the Kurus, obtained justly, led by Dhritarastra and placing the son of Shantanu at the helm of affairs †

'Vasudera said—Words like these having been spoken by Gandhari that lord of men Dhritarastra said these words to Durjodhana in the midst of the kings 'O lord of men, O Durjodhana, listen to what I am going to say my dear son, and act according to that if you entertain respect for your father. It will be well with you. That lord of creatures Soma was the first who begot the race of Kurus, and sixth in descent from Soma was Yayati the son of Nahusa. He had five sons, the best among royal sages and of them Yadu of great energy was the first, and was the lord. Younger than he was Puru and he was our ancestor, he

* Professor M. N. Dutt's "Translation of the Mahabharata", Drona Parva, Chapter LXXXVI, page 125, verses 1—17

† Professor M. N. Dutt's "Translation of the Mahabharata", Chapter CXLVIII, page 204. Udyoga Parva, verses 25—36

was brought forth by Sharmistha, the daughter of Vaishamparvan Yadu, O foremost among the Bharatas, was the son of Deravani, and was therefore the grandson of Shukra the wise kishi of immeasurable energy. The ancestor of the Yadavas, endued with strength and prowess as he was, being full of pride and vanity and wicked intelligence, insulted the Kshatriyas. He did not act up to the instructions of his father being stupefied by the pride of his strength and having never sustained a defeat he insulted his father and his brothers. In the four quarters of the globe, Yadu was the strongest man and having brought all the rulers of men under subjection he lived in the city called after the elephant. His father, Yayati, born of Nahusha being very much angry with him, cursed his son O son of Gandhari, and exiled him from the kingdom. Those brothers who followed the lord of the elder trailer, vain of his strength were also cursed. The great king Yayati, having cursed these sons placed his second son Puru who remained devoted to him on the throne which indeed was suitable. It is evident thus that even the eldest son can be superseded and deprived of the kingdom, and even a younger son can get the kingdom for his attentions to the aged. Thus was also the grandfather of my father—conversant with all virtues, Prajapa the ruler of the universe and known in the four worlds. That man among the rulers of the earth, while ruling his kingdom virtuously had born to him three sons of renown and having the attributes of the gods. Of them Derapa was the foremost, eldest and then came Valluka, and the third Shantanu that wise man was my grandfather. Derapi that best among kings though endued with great energy had a defect in his skin, but he was a virtuous man, a speaker of truth and ever devoted to attending on his father. Derapi was honoured by all the subjects, indentions and respected by the good and he was loved by all—the old and the young. He was benevolent, attached to truth and devoted to the good of all creatures and ever obeyed the command of his father as also of the Brahmanas. He was the elder brother of Valluka and also of the great souled Shantanu, in fact among all these great souled men excellent brotherly feelings existed.

In course of time, that old king, the best among rulers of men, had all arrangements made for the installation according to the holy books (of his son). That lord had all auspicious arrangements made but the Brahmanas and the old men amongst the citizens with the subjects of the province, all dissuaded him from installing Derapi and that ruler of men, having heard of the exclusion of his elder son from the installation had his voice choked with tears and became sorrowful for his son. Though he was benevolent, conversant with virtue, attached to truth, and loved by his subjects, yet he had a defect in his skin. The gods do not approve of that ruler of men who has a defect in his limbs. So saying, those foremost among the true-born dissuaded that for most among the rulers of men. Derapi too, who was defective of one limb seeing that ruler of men with his heart pained and struck with grief for his son dissuaded him from carrying out his intentions and went to the woods. Valluka, too, giving up his kingdom, established himself in the family of his maternal uncle, and abandoning his father and brother he obtained a very wealthy kingdom. Being commanded by Valluka, Santanu, well known in this world, on the retirement of his father, became, O king, the king in that kingdom. In the same way, myself though the eldest, was excluded from the kingdom owing to the defect in my limbs, O Bharata in favour of Pandu, endued with good understanding, after due reflection. That ruler of men Pandu too obtained the kingdom though he was young and at his death this kingdom, O chastiser of foes, belongs to his sons. Myself having never participated in the kingdom, how do you desire it, being the son of one who was never a king. You are not a king, and yet you desire to take another's property. Yudhishthira is the son of a king and has a great soul, and this kingdom justly goes to him. He being endued with great attributes

is the lord of the Kuru race as also the ruler of the kingdom. He is attached to truth and is never beside his senses, he follows the teachings of the Holy books and does good to his friends, he is an honest man and is dear to his subjects, he feels for his well wishers, has his senses under control and is the lord of honest men. Forgiveness, patience, self restraint, sincerity, devotion to truth, a good appreciation of the Holy books, benevolence, love to creatures and ability to rule justly, all these attributes of a king are in Yudhishtira. You, on the other hand, are the son of one who has never been a king, you lead the life of a dishonourable man, you are covetous, ever have wicked intentions towards your friends, O you not endowed with humility, how under these circumstances can you take this kingdom which belongs to others and which comes to the successors according to a certain order. With your folly removed, give over one half of the kingdom with its animals and royal garments, and the remainder will be enough for your own living and that of your younger brothers *"

These words of good advice had no effect on Durjodhana as also the advice given by the parents and the patriarchs Bhishma and Drona, for Durjodhana sternly refused the peace proposal of Krishna on behalf of the Pandavas with these significant words —

"O Krishna when I depended on others the Pandavas had that kingdom which ought not to have been given away. It might be out of ignorance or fear the Pandus got it, but now they were required to win it. So long as I have strength in my arms I would not without fight part with even a piece of land of the dimension of the point of a sharp needle †"

The gist of the reply of Krishna settles the characteristic traits of Durjodhana. This is as follows —

"O Fool! you seem to think that there is nothing against your conduct towards the Pandavas, but all the kings present here know full well how you, being jealous of their prosperity, you in consultation with Sakuni arranged a game of dice and deprived them unjustly of their wealth and property and disgraced them in every way. Who else but yourself could ill treat the wife of your elder brother in the manner as you did in the open Council Hall, using all sorts of abusive language with your friend Karna? You spared no pains to destroy them from their early youth by employing all sorts of evil methods, *e.g.* snakes, rope, water and fire. If you do not give them their just paternal property and share in the kingdom, know ye wicked fellow, you shall have to do so when you will be overthrown and deprived of your prosperity by them. Your desire to die the death of a hero will then be fulfilled. You are disregarding the good advice of your well wishers. What you intended doing will not lead you to any fame or virtue. Peace is the most desirable thing for you but alas! that you could not discern through the weakness of your intellect."

His open censure on the Kuru elders, headed by Bhishma and Drona, is no doubt worthy of mention —

"It is your great fault that you do not restrain the wicked Durjodhana, who had been guilty of very great misconducts in your very face. You have bright examples before you how the throne of the old Bhoja King usurped by Kansa, was recovered by me. Nor is this all. The great Dharma by the command of

* Professor M. N. Dutt's "English Translation of the Mahabharata" Chapter CXLIX, pages 204 to 206 Udyoga Parva, verses 1-36

† English Translation of Udyoga Parva, Chapter CXLVII

the Paramesthî made over all the Dhanvas and Dairvas to Varuna and they were all imprisoned in Poesa. Now it is your turn to make over the wicked Durjodhana, Karna, Sakuni and Dushasana to the Pandavas bound head to foot if you do not want extinction of the Kshatriya race in the fight."

The meeting of the two important relatives Kunti, mother of the Pandavas, and their messenger of peace Krishna is a very important event in Epic history. The majestic Queen of Pandu, the model of forbearance, virtue and martial spirit tells as a lesson to her sons the story of Bidura in whose real interpretation success will lie*. Here the good lady recited the words of the heavenly voices heard on the births of the two heroes Bhishma and Arjuna, and in Santi Parva† the great Bhishma admonished Yudhisthira, that the line of his conduct was not in consonance with the boon of his birth with which his parents were blessed. These questions are very important as they show the position of the parties in relation to past history and the just claim of the parties to the throne by the responsible head Dhritarastra and his Queen. The boon of birth of the Pandu heroes was spoken of by Bhishma and Kunti, which settled the question of fancy tales of Divine Birth.

The great fight of the Mahabharata was for the division of the paternal properties and that of the Ramayana was for punishing the demon Ravana, who stole the Queen of Rama and kept her in captivity. In the case of the former it was a fight in which all the kings of India took sides with the contending parties, whereas in the latter no other kings or human beings but the brother of the demon king Ravana and the brother of the monkey king, Bally, were implicated. In the Ramayana the exploits of Rama were chronicled with the poetic embellishment of Kavya literature, whereas in the Mahabharata the heroic deeds of the Kurus, Pandavas and their respective followers were described graphically. Each section deals with the deeds of the principal heroes of the campaign, a style not to be found in the Ramayana. If the Ramayana had been written first then its method surely would have been followed by the Mahabharata. But it was not.

European scholars have found the Ramayana an Epic according to their ideas, but it is not according to the views of the author. It is a Kavya out and out and not an Epic in the true sense of the Indian

* (18) This story which is called Jaya (victory) should be heard by one who is desirous of victory, and hearing it one conquers the world speedily and vanquishes his enemies. (19) This story makes a woman bring forth a son and a heroic son, a pregnant woman hearing it repeated many times certainly brings forth a hero. Mbh. Udyoga Parva, page 189, Chapter CXXXVI verses 18-19.

† (22) The conduct you wish to follow, urged on by your intelligence and wisdom, is not quite of a piece with those blessings which your father Pandu or your mother Kunti used to solicit for you. (Shanti Parva, Chapter LXXV, page 112)

view. The Mahabharata is not a book of one family of kings of Ajodhya, like the Ramayana. It is a book in which all the princes of India, whose forefathers laid down their lives in the famous battle of Kurukshetra, were interested. The exploits of the All-India heroes were given the honour of a section of the great book in the description of the Great War with the history of the time and were preserved in the realms of the descendants of those heroes by their court reciters, to be recited at state functions and sacrifices. This is the true cause of the unusual growth of the Mahabharata, and the many repetitions and sometimes even contradictions in it. All these sections were strung together by the princes to make them a consistent whole. It was during this process that the Ramayana was introduced into the Mahabharata as its consistent part, being the glory of the kings of Ajodhya, who did not play any prominent part in the battle of Kurukshetra. The substance of the historical truth about Bhishma, Drona, Karna and Salya can be gathered as well as why the old patriarchs fought for the unjust side of Duryodhana. This should first be seen and learned.

Bhishma is one of the greatest heroes and wise-men of the Bharata race. His education is described by Vyasa as follows —

“Vaishampayana said — Then Vyasa O King that foremost of all persons conversant with the Vedas, looking at that ancient and omniscient person viz., Narada, said,—If O King, you wish to hear of duties and morality at length, then ask Bhishma, O mighty armed one that old grandfather of the Kurus. Conversant with all duties and endowed with universal knowledge that son of Bhagiratha will remove all your doubts regarding the difficult subjects of duties. That goddess, the celestial river of three courses gave birth to him. He saw with his physical eyes all the celestials headed by Indra. Having pleased with his dutiful services the celestial Rishis, headed by Brihaspati, he acquired a knowledge of royal duties. That foremost one among the Kurus acquired a knowledge also of that science, with its interpretations which Ushanas and the Rishi who is the preceptor of the celestials knowledge. Having practised rigid vows, that mighty-armed one obtained a knowledge of all the Vedas and their branches, from Vashishtha and from Chyavana of Bhrigu's race. In the days of yore he studied under the eldest son of the grandfather himself, viz., the effulgent Sanatkumara, well conversant with the truths of mental and spiritual science. He learnt the duties in full of the Yatis from Markendeya. That foremost of men learnt science from Rama and Shakra. Although born as man, his death itself is in his own hands. Although childless, yet he has many blissful regions hereafter as heard by us. Rishis of great merit were his courtiers. There is nothing on earth which is unknown to him.”*

It will be seen that Bhishma is more a romantic personage than an actual being. If his descent according to genealogy is to be considered, he could not see Indra in person, he could not be the pupil of Sanatkumar, Chyavan, and Brihaspati and at the same time read lectures to Yudhishthira. Of course the ancient sages were very careful men and

they saved the question of anichronism with certain persons like Parasurama, Bali etc., by making them immortals, but such cannot be the case with Bhishma. His birth and dying at will do not synchronise with the said sages and demy India. He saw and learnt his lessons. Besides, neither his name nor those of Drona or Salya, who were the reputed Commanders-in-Chief, were mentioned in the table of contents in Adi Parva, Chapter I, or another table of contents in Adi Parva, Chapter 62.

Also, his fight with Parasurama for a trivial cause, that of not taking part in revenging Gandharba Chitrangada, who killed Bhishma's brother of the same name, seems rather strange. Vedabati's transformation into Sita in the next life and Amba's transformation into Shikhandi cannot form part of Epic history, though they are mentioned in the Uttarakanda Ramayana and Mahabharata, respectively. In the current Mahabharata the character of Bhishma (Dehabrata) is inconsistent and anomalous. The same can be said about Drona and Salya. There is hardly any justification for Bhishma or Drona or Salya fighting for Durjodhana when they were at heart praying for the victory of the Pandavas. It is clearly said in Bhishma Parva, Chapter 13, that depending on Bhishma's strength Durjodhana dared to play a deceitful game of dice. There is a clear mention by Sanjaya in Chapter 65 of the Bhishma Parva that the Pandavas did not fight wrongfully.

Sanjaya said:—Hear O King with perfect attention, and hearing do you understand what you hear. There was nothing the result of incantation and nothing the production of illusion. Neither, O monarch, did the sons of Pandu create any new source of apprehension, those warriors endowed with strength are fighting their battles according to the rules of fair combat. The sons of Pritha, O Bharata, desirous of securing illustrious fame, ever perform all acts—even the maintenance of their lives—in perfect accordance with the rules of morality. Attended by excellent prosperity and endowed with great strength and conforming to all morality, they never turn back from the fight. Victory ever attends righteousness. For this reason, O ruler of earth, the sons of Pritha are undaunted in battle and are ever courted by victory. Your sons are of wicked intentions and are intent on perpetrating sin, they are cruel and of low deeds—therefore are they always routed in the battle O ruler of men. Various heartless injuries are done to the Pandavas by your sons, like men of low extraction. You are disregarding all the offences of your sons.

Bhishma was a great admirer of Krishna, if not his ardent follower. It is inconceivable that his name was not mentioned in the Srimad Bhagavata where Bidura, Kunti and other characters of the Mahabharata who were attached to Krishna, were given. Bhishma however, cannot, be justified as a historical character who can be identified with the title of Dehabrata, especially when he excused his fighting an unjust cause on the grounds of being maintained out of the resources of the Kurus. Bhishma's birth mythology is not supported by any Vedic accounts and necessarily he cannot belong to such an early age as against the time which the genealogy of his birth fixes. Bhishma is not mentioned in the

family history just quoted (in Udyoga Parva, Chapter CXLVII) Bhishma's birth is ascribed to the sacred river Ganges, which is altogether a myth. The dialogue between father and son in the Mahabharata conveying this important point illustrating the sacrifice of Bhishma was translated by Professor Max Muller thus —

“Thou dost advise that I should please
 With sacrifice the deities
 Such rites I disregard as vain
 Through these can none perfection gain
 Why sate the gods, at cruel feasts,
 With flesh and blood of slaughtered beasts?
 For other sacrifices I
 Will offer unremittingly,
 The sacrifice of calm, of truth,
 The sacrifice of peace, of ruth,
 Of life serenely, purely, spent
 Of thought profound on Brahma bent
 Who offers these, may death defy,
 And hope for immortality
 And then thou says't that I should wed,
 And sons should gain to tend me, dead,
 By offering pious gifts, to seal,
 When I am gone, my spirit's weal
 But I shall ask no pious zeal
 Of sons to guard my future weal
 No child of mine shall ever boast
 His rites have saved his father's ghost
 Of mine own bliss I'll pay the price,
 And be myself my sacrifice”

Pleasure, health and wealth grow out of the rivers and the resort of the great god Narayana is water. It is for this reason that the images of gods are thrown into the river after worship even now. It is well-known that the orthodox Hindus offer water to the manes of this godlike Bhishma even now along with their forefathers, so great is the popularity of the Hindu Epics in India. Bhishma followed in the wake of Poru, but Rama of the Ikshaku race went into exile for his step mother.

It was a time to try dutiful sons, but in the case of Yudhishthira it was a time of jealousy between cousins due to the uncle's indulgence and the intrigue of their relatives. The dramatic Mahabharata, which introduced Bhishma's prowess as the mainstay for the attainment of their vicious ends at the dice play, is nothing less than the murder of the whole thing—in fact, there the death of Bhishma took place. That Bhishma, who failed to answer the intricate question put by Draupadi in the dice hall, could not be the preceptor

of Yudhishthira, whom Bhishma called upon to answer the questions put to him. Bhishma was made to play the very low role of a retainer of the Kuru Court. He with Drona, Kripa, etc., were made to fight for Durjodhana against their own personal independent will, as they avowed that they were quite helpless in having to fight an unjust cause as they were maintained by the Kuru Court. Likewise Bhishma became a reciter of old legends he knew as instructive to the ruler of the Kuru Court when he won the war. The dutiful Bhishma recited these even when he was dying and lying in state for the proper time to die. This is nothing less than a romance.

Yayati called upon his sons to prove their filial love and piety and bestowed the throne on the only dutiful son Poru. This is what the Bharata Samhita describes. The Mahabharata took the son of the ideal monarch Santanu as its model and called him God-like-vow-observer or Debabrata or Gangeya.

“Vaishampayana said —Having said this, the goddess disappeared then and there. Taking her son with her, she went away to the place she wished to go. That son of Santanu was named both Gangeya and Devabrata, and he excelled his father in all accomplishments. Santanu then went to his own capital with a sorrowful heart. I shall now narrate to you the many accomplishments of Santanu. And the great fortune of the illustrious king of the Bharata race, the history of whom is called this effulgent Mahabharata.”

The next chapter gives up to verse 20 the glorious account of the King Santanu and the origin of the name Santanu is found in Chapter XCV, verse 45, that those who touched the hand of the king were restored to youth, feeling indescribable pleasure. The pious King Santanu retired to the forest after long enjoyment of all worldly pleasures in the company of women, wealth and prosperity. After this the important meeting of the son Bhishma, his mother Ganga and King Santanu is described in Chapter XXI, Adi Parva, in a novel manner, which speaks more of poetic imagination than actual credible historical fact. No reason whatsoever was given for the separation between the father and the son. The king could not recognise the son nor the mother at the meeting. The mother spoke of the son's education and qualifications and Santanu took the youth to his capital and installed him as his heir apparent to the throne. Then the alleged son not only gave up his title to the throne but promised to remain Brahmachari throughout his life, entitling him to the name of Bhishma and the boon of dying at will for the sake of his father's love affairs. In the same chapter the marriage of his father is described and the son is said to have performed

* Professor M. N. Dutt's "English Translation of the Mahabharata Adi Parva", Chapter XCV, page 145, verses 45-48.

the office of the go-between, which is an unheard of thing in any history of the world

This chapter is the most conspicuous for containing as it does contradictory statements on the character of King Santanu. The river Ganges became shallow by the arrow of Bhishma, which attracted the notice of Santanu. Nothing can be made out of this. If Ganga is relieved of the curse as she disappeared in the previous chapter she can hardly be expected to come back again to deliver the son to the father in the manner she did. Then again Vasistha, the ideal example of forbearance, could not have been capable of cursing the Basus for their trivial omission in not making obeisance to him. He was famous for not having cursed or taken any action against the murderer of his own son Sakti. Bhishma is described as a great invincible warrior who learnt arms from Parasurama and defeated him in a famous fight described in the Mahabharata. But this cannot be so. Rama, the hero of the Ramayana, already curbed the powers of Parasurama at the time of breaking the bow of Siva, described in the Ramayana and Purana. Parasurama ceased to be the teacher or wielder of arms and he was banished from India proper after his sacrifice by Kasyapa the priest of the Bharata kings.

‘ Having made the Earth shorn of Kshatriyas for twenty one times the powerful Bhargava, at the completion of a horse sacrifice, gave away the Earth as sacrificial present to Kasyapa. For preserving the residence of the Kshatriyas, Kasyapa, O King, pointing with his hand that still held the sacrificial ladle, said these words—O great sage go to the shores of the southern Ocean. You should not, O Rama, live within my kingdom. At these words Ocean all on a sudden made for Jamadagni's son, on his other shore a region called Surparaka. Kasyapa also, O king having accepted the Earth in gift, made a present of it to the Brahmanas and entered into the woods*’

Vasistha or Bhrigu were the usurpers of the post of the priesthood of the Kasyapa family to which Narada belonged. A Kasayapa descendant was coming to bring to life King Parikshita, but he was won over by the Naga King (Astika Parva). There is the Aila-Kasyap discourse in the Shanti Parva, which speaks for itself. In the Mahabharata, Bhishma was found to be a follower of the Narayana Krishna cult, but he is not conspicuously mentioned in the Srimad-Bhagabata Purana, where Bidura, the Pandavas and Kunti were all mentioned as renowned followers of that cult. What is more, even Duryodhana was mentioned as a background for good character. This proves that the introduction of Bhishma into the Mahabharata was of a much later date.

Bhishma is not an historical character, nor is he connected with the mythology of India. He is a romantic character, approaching divi-

* English Translation of the Mahabharata, Shanti Parva, Chapter L, page 69, verses 63—67

nity, introduced in the same way as many Greek Epic characters were introduced after the Indian fashion Bhishma's only greatness lies in his mission for the marriage of his alleg'd father Santanu by his vow of sacrifice and nothing else—a fact quite unnatural and against the true character of King Santanu No sensible father would stoop to such a level, and it is inconceivable that a son should be so feared when he had not yet ascended the throne and the father, who wanted to marry the girl of a Dasa King, was in possession of the throne and power.

The real meaning of the boon of dying at will connected with Bhishma may be explained The man whose inclinations are not suited to his age feels the full burden of his years and dies at will The man who kept quiet at the dice play and would not answer the questions put to him by Draupadi cannot be believed to have been fit to give lectures on political history, philosophy, religion and emancipation There is a Hindi Mahabharata by Soubal Singh Chowana where the question was dramatically and tauntingly raised by Draupadi Besides, as a positive proof of noble birth, Bhishma's instinct of honour should have revolted at the sight of such a dastardly act as the dragging of Draupadi in the public Dice Hall, for she was no other than the universally respected wife of the ideal king and elder cousin of Duryodhana The learned annotator Nilkantha's views are clear on the point

The war sections including Bhishma Parva, were not important as recording the war tactics of great geniuses and the truth of events or the valour of the contending heroes of the field, but prove to the world that things are not what they seem to be in relation to virtue and vice When the senior relatives and preceptors support an unjust cause and aggressors in their attempt to rob the lawful owners then there is no sin or shame in killing such men This is clearly shown in the account of King Dandi, where the gods headed by Sri Krishna fought against the Kurus and the Pandavas and were defeated by them This is a Pouranic account, but it had an Epic connection This speaks of Bhishma's greatness, for he gave shelter to King Dandi when no one else dared do so This is the true test of noble birth

There is a reference to one King Danda in the Uttarakanda Ramayana (Cantos 93 and 94) as having outraged the modesty of Araya, the daughter of Bhrigu The king and his kingdom were destroyed by the curse of the sage The Apsara Urbasi, who was cursed and assumed the form of a mare, was in the possession of King Dandi Sri Krishna called upon the king to surrender her to him, which he refused to do, and that was the cause of the fight between Devas and the Kurus Pandavas

Bhisma was not living with his father when he was introduced by the Ganga, whom Santanu could not recognise as his wife or the mother of the child. If Bhisma was really living at the Kuru Court he must have been found on the Ganges bank as a stray, unclaimed child like Drona and Kripa, reared up by King Santanu, and was in no way connected with the Kuru race. If this was so, the general public would not have annually offered him oblation at the tarpan ceremony—like those who were childless—at the time of doing it to their own forefathers.

The Hindu shrines in India were connected with past mythological and historical characters, but no trace is found of Bhisma anywhere in India, which makes one think Bhisma was a fictitious being. The historical elements in the Mahabharata can only be traced if characters like Bhisma are first discriminated against and eliminated. It will be seen that nothing is said about the mysterious origin of the sons of Pandu. Had there really been anything like that which found a place in the dramatic Mahabharata of the rhapsodists then it would not have been overlooked by Duryodhana, his father and his friends at the time of consideration of the claim of the sons of the Pandu to the half of the kingdom. Veteran politicians like Dhritarashtra, who was described as being blind to his own faults and a severe censor of other's acts, would not have failed to make capital use of the question of the mysterious births of the sons of Pandu.

It is one thing to discover a truth, but very different to make others see it. All discoveries of truth were laughed at in the beginning. The ancient history of the Aryan race cannot be taught by the Epic unless one has fully learnt, marked and digested the three phases of the light the Epic sheds, as a mythological history, romance, and a drama. Historical facts when dramatised tell upon the imagination of the people better than mere fiction or romance. It is for this reason that historical facts have got to be ascertained first and romance and fiction should be exposed and their purpose told. The three main branches of learning are history, science and art. The first comprehends genuine records of the past, the second examines their truth from knowledge of the characters, inclinations and inferences therefrom, while the third includes all that is beautiful, charming and graceful in metre, language sound, colour, and object to present to human perception what is perfect. The Epic assumes that state, but in process of time is diverted by wrong handling to satisfy a vitiated taste, and has deteriorated to its present state.

It has been shown from the text of the Mahabharata what were the family history of the Kurus, the claims of the Pandavas and the conduct

of Durjodhana. Now it remains to be shown why, like a coward, Yudhis-
thira and his brothers suffered the indignities said to have been inflicted
on Draupadi the heroine of the dramatic Epic Mahabharata. Such a
thing did not happen in the historic Epic, for Bhishma was a romantic
personage and the table of contents does not mention anything about
him or Draupadi. The verse in the Adi Parva and the table of contents
clearly state that, solicited by Janmejaya and the thousand Brahmanas,
Vyasa taught the Mahabharata to his disciple Vaisampayana, who recited
the Bharata at the interval of the sacrifice where Vyasa fully described the
glory of the Kuru race, the virtue of Gandhari, constancy of Kunti,
goodness of the Pandavas, wisdom of Vidura, with the greatness of
Krishna against the evil conduct of the sons of Dhritarastra. It was
composed of 24000 verses exclusive of episodes, which is the real
Bharata (*Vide* 97—101 Slokas, Chapter I, Adi Parva).

The next list of heroes of the contending parties in the dramatic
Mahabharata are as follows —The tree of virtue and religion is Yudhis-
thira, Arjuna its trunk, Bhishma its branches, the two sons of Madri its
flowers and fruit, and the very roots are Krishna, Brahma (sacrifice) and
Brahmanas, whereas Durjodhana is the tree of passion, Karna its trunk,
Sakuni its branches, Dussasana its fruit and flowers and its roots Dhritara-
stra (*Vide* 108-9 Slokas, Adi Parva, Chapter I). There is no mention
whatsoever of Bhishma and Drona or Salya in these important verses,
nor is any mention made there of the great heroine Draupadi.

The mention of the wailings of Dhritarastra in the table of contents
is not only out of place and an anachronism, but is contradictory to the
body of the Mahabharata. The table of contents before the wailings of
Dhritarastra gives the cause of the dice play and makes no mention of
the dragging of Draupadi.

There is no justification whatsoever for putting in another table of
contents the wailings of Dhritarastra, which by their language and style
are very modern and an interpolation of the worst type. The translation
of the verse where the dice play with its cause is referred to in the table
of contents is —

“After killing Jarasandha, proud of his prowess through the wise counsel of
Krishna and by the prowess of Bhishma and Arjuna, Yudhis-
thira acquired the right to perform the Rajanya, which abounded in provisions and offerings and was full
of transcendent merits. Durjodhana came to this sacrifice. When he saw on all
sides the great wealth of the Pandavas,—the offerings the precious stones, gold and
jewels, elephants and horses, valuable textures, garments and mantles, shawls and furs,
carpets made of the skin of the Bantava,—he was filled with envy, and became very
angry. When he saw the hall of assembly, beautifully constructed by Moya after
the celestial court, he became exceedingly sorry. (To chagrin him more) when he was
confused at certain architectural deceptions, Bhishma sneered at him, before Vasudeva,

saying he was of low birth. It was represented to Dhritarashtra that his son, though he was partaking of various objects of enjoyment and valuable things, was becoming pale, lean and meagre. Out of affection for him the blind king gave his son permission to play at dice (with the Pandavas). When Krishna came to know this, he became very angry. And being displeased, he did nothing to stop the dispute, but overlooked the fatal game and other horrible unjust deeds that were the result of it * "

Now the incidents just referred to in the above quotation are described in Shanti Parva Chapter CXXIV and in the next chapter Yudhishthira openly said that he was disappointed, as he thought Duryodhana would not fight but would give him half the kingdom. This is the history of the claim and demand of Yudhishthira, but such was not the case in the demand of the Pancha Grama (five villages), which is not referred to anywhere in the table of contents. It has both a metaphysical and ironical meaning, this challenge by Krishna at the Kuru Court. In Daksha Samhita, 7th Chapter, Slokas 17-18, is explained the meaning of Pancha Grama, with the definition of an unconquerable hero. It would be a sad spectacle if Yudhishthira descended to such a low level as to be satisfied with the five villages which was all Dhritarashtra wanted to give the Pandavas after the first dice play. It will not be out of place here to point out that the table of contents nowhere refers to the second dice play, which is more than dramatic.

The annotator Nilkantha has explained the object of writing Birata Parva and how it formed part of the Mahabharata. This bears out what is said in the Daksha Samhita, already referred to, about Pancha Grama. The hero of the Indian Epic of the metaphysical world was Yudhishthira, on whose behalf Sri Krishna, the ideal conception of godhead, was represented as trying either to conclude an honourable peace or to challenge the enemy in a way which would create terror in their minds. It was for this reason the word Pancha-Grama, which Dhritarashtra offered and the Pandavas refused, was referred to as a nonny or chastisement by Sri Krishna that the Pandavas were then in quite an altered position and had discovered themselves as heroes after Birata Parva to convey to them what is the real meaning of an unconquerable hero as referred to before in Daksha Samhita.

The institutes of Daksha explained — Attachment, illusion, distraction, shame, apprehension should be overcome by all means, and he who succeeds with ancillary attributes of mind and heart to discover the soul of man, is an unconquerable hero. He is not like a man who acquired forcibly the kingdoms of others and wanted to be styled a hero. What the institutes of Daksha explain and the annotator Nilkantha confirms, is that such a challenge was worthy of the hero, Yudhishthira, after

disclosing himself at the end of the promised time of exile passed in Birata Parva. The annotator has shown that the Udyoga Parva of the Mahabharata is universally held by wise-men to be the best of all the Parvas, as it taught that God takes the side of the just who, though quite capable of taking steps against the wrongs done by their enemies, do not do so to satisfy the enemy's desire and to fulfil the promise imposed upon them by wicked dice play.

Dice play was in vogue from Vedic times, King Nala lost his kingdom through it, but there was no mention of staking his wife Damayanti. The staking of a wife was never heard of at any time in any civilised or uncivilised country of the world. This was only an act of the bard to create a stirring dramatic effect on the audience and there is no historic truth behind it. The Epic Mahabharata was originally built upon a historical background, but was at last converted into an allegory of metaphysics. These historical personages are used as glorious examples to convert the general public into admirers and to convey to them the difficult implications of the spiritual and philosophical development of mind and soul. This is the real aim of the current Mahabharata from the invocation Sloka to the vast enlargement in the various divisions of the great Epic.

It will be interesting to mention here that in the Epic Ramayana there was no dice play and the exile of Rama took place on account of his wicked step-mother. The boon promised to the Queen Kakeyi could easily have been disregarded as the installation ceremony of Rama was announced before the asking of the boon, but Rama did not like to place his father in an awkward position. This was another instance of a son gladly undertaking the hardship of exile for the sake of his father's promise.

A life of exile in the woods is a sort of education to win the laurel of fame by putting into practice valour and skill at arms. The annotator Nilkantha has said so in his note. It is clearly mentioned that Yudhishthira visited the shrines and came across distinguished sages and heard from them experiences and lessons on how to become successful in life. The incident of the dragging of Draupadi at the dice play and the Durbasa incident in the Bana Parva were to show how devotion to God could foil the wicked in their attempts and nothing else. The discourse between Yudhishthira and Draupadi shows the spiritual culture of the couple.

In Bana Parva the good and evil companions of the company were discussed and in the Saunaka and Yudhishthira discourse the talk centred round the praise of Yoga over interested religion and virtue.

In Bhishma Parva it was shown that this Parva was merely made to show to this world the glory and power of an attached devotee like Bhishma, where Sri Krishna had to break his own promise in order that his devotee's words might come true, and it has no historical background whatsoever. In this Parva, Gita was included, which is strange, standing as it does after the queer position of Arjuna's advising Yudhishthira not to be afraid of Bhishma in Chapter XXI.

'O mighty armed hero O Dhananjaya how shall we be able to fight with the Dhritarashtra's sons' army when the grandfather himself commands it. Immovable and impenetrable is this Yruha formed according to the rules of the Shastras, by that chastiser of foes, Bhishma, of unfading glory. O chastiser of foes, we are doubtful of success. How can victory be ours in the face of this kuru army?'

O king, that chastiser of foes, Arjuna, thus spoke of your army to the son of Prithu, Yudhishthira who was in great grief. O king, hear how a small number of men, endued with every quality, can defeat a large army. O king, you are without malice. I shall therefore tell you of the means. The Rishi Narada as well as Bhishma and Drona know it. In the days of yore, at the battle between the celestials and the Danavas the Grandfather himself said (the foil wing) to Indra and the other celestials. They that are desirous of victory do not so much conquer by might and prowess as by truth, compassion, piety and virtue. Therefore, knowing the difference between piety and impiety and understanding what is meant by covetousness and having recourse to only exertion, fight without any arrogance for victory is certain to be there, where righteousness is. O king, for this reason, know that victory is certain to be ours in this battle. Narada said, 'Victory is certainly there, where Sri Krishna is.' Victory is inherent to Sri Krishna. It follows Madhava (Krishna), victory is one of his attributes, so is humility. Govinda (Sri Krishna) possesses might which is infinite even in the midst of countless foes. He is without and beyond all pains. He is the most eternal Purusha. Victory is certainly there where Krishna is. (Bhishma Parva Chapter XXI, verses 3-14)

This is what Arjuna reads to Yudhishthira in the Mahabharata, and there is another version in Sanjaya's reading of the lecture of Sri Krishna to Arjuna on the battlefield to cry down the heroism of the hero Arjuna and to speak in very high terms of the Kuru warriors, all killed by the God himself. Nor is this all. Sri Krishna told Arjuna to worship Durga and to fight Bhishma in the next chapter. All these speak of separate editions of the Mahabharata in different times.

The Indian Epic was first conceived and the Greeks copied it, which the learned Professor Max Muller admitted. Certain customs, manners, forms of gods and their worship, which were found to have been common among the Indians and Greeks and a striking resemblance between the Trojan War and the war of the Ramayana prove that Rome and Greece by their intercourse with India through trade and invasion realised the greatness of Indian culture and adopted it in the best way they could. It is well known that the ancient Hindu religion never admitted foreigners within it, and even now, it is patent even to casual observers.

In the Indian Epics no individual names are traced for their authorships, but they contain a colossal mass of didactic, lyrical and dramatic material full of mythological allusions and references representing the luxuriant growth of several ages. They betray the taste of pedantic editors and reciters to win applause from the learned as well as the illiterate audiences whom they addressed. They must, therefore, contain all kinds of things to suit the taste of different people. This is not a fanciful imagining without anything to bear it out. The constitution of public sacrifices with the different sorts of addresses for different people will serve to convince every reasonable man.

The current Epics of the Ramayana and the Mahabharata do not represent the age of Vyasa and Valmiki but a much later date. They were more artistic in design, ornate and dramatic in composition, with such divisions as made admission of extemporaneous foreign matter within them easy. They cannot, however, be compared with any other Epics of the world. The subsequent development in the Epics is distinguished with the age of advancing civilisation. All these are quite different from Western ideas and there is no trace of immigration into India from the West from the early days up to the Epic period.

The reciters of the Hindu Epics introduced Karna as their hero, greater than the Kshatriya Arjuna, making connection with the Royal family and disgracing it at the same time with the absurd story of conceiving a child when a mere girl not having attained the age of puberty. They were not satisfied with this. They made Karna such a great hero that Sri Krishna stooped so low as to offer him the kingdom, and Karna could not be bought off even by such an offer. He was always anxious to fight Arjuna. Poor men did not see that Karna was defeated several times before by Arjuna, at the Swayambara of Draupadi and at the fight on behalf of King Birata to recover his cows. The Mahabharata and the Ramayana were converted into the panegyric of the distinct lines of kings Solar and Lunar by the Sutas for selfish motives. Karna was made a hero of the Sutas.

"What harsh words, I said to the sons of Pandu, O Krishna, were for the gratification of the son of Dhritarastra and I am now struck with remorse for that misdeed.

'When you will see me, O Krishna, slain by Savyasachi, then will the Purnaschita (the second part of the ceremonies) commence, O Janardana.

"When the sons of Pandu will drink the blood of Dussashana, repeatedly making loud roars, then will the drinking of the Soma juice of the sacrifice have been finished.

'When Drona and Bhishma will be overthrown by the two Princes of Panchala, then will the ceremonies connected with the sacrifice of the son of Dhritarastra be brought to an end, O Janardana.

"When Bhimasena of great strength will be the slayer of Durjodhana then will the ceremonies be finished

"When the daughters in law and the grand daughters in law (wives of grandsons) of Dhritarashtra will assemble together being deprived of their protectors, their sons and their husbands O Keshava, weeping loudly with Gandhari in the field of battle frequented by dogs and vultures and other carnivorous animals then will the final bath in connection with the sacrifice have taken place, O Janardana

'Do not let these best of the Kshatriyas who are old in learning and old in age meet with a useless death on account of your doings O slayer of Madhu

"The entire race of Kshatriyas will meet with death by weapons in Kurukshetra, the holiest spot in all the worlds O Keshava O you of lotus eyes manage things in such a way in this case that we may gain our end—that united together the Kshatriyas go to Heaven, O you of the Vrishni race

'So long as mountains and lakes will exist, O Janardana so long will the fame of this event last—that is for ever

'The Brahmanas will tell the world of the great battle of Mahabharata The wealth of Kshatriyas O you of Vrishni race is what they win in the field of battle

'Bring here the son of Kunti for me to fight O Keshava for ever keeping this conversation secret O Chastiser of enemies

The Greeks were great admirers of India and followed Indians in every respect Solon ordered first that the rhapsodists should keep closely to the traditional text of the poem at their public recitals and Pisistratus appointed a committee of several poets to collect the scattered lays and revise the text found in extant copies or in the oral traditions of the rhapsodists Thus, in course of time, the original texts underwent many arbitrary alterations at their hands, chiefly to suit the tastes of the different ages in order to make the recital popular and lucrative The original compositions of Vyasa and Valmiki were disfigured, lost, and altered, and in this way the Indian Epics grew in size incongruous and out of order both in sequence of time and reasoning

The Greek Epic writer of note belonged to 640 B C and it is held that elegaic and iambic poetry like the Epic owed its origin to Ionian Colonies in Asia Minor Poetry and prose first developed among the Ionians in the era of seven sages in the beginning of the sixth century B C Aesop published his fables and Pherecydes of Syros composed philosophical prose writing In the fifth century B C the philosophy of the Ionian School was actually founded and Pythagoras, who established his philosophy in Magna Graccia, died in 504 B C Herodotus, the father of history, and Hippocrates, the founder of medical science, died in 424 B C and 377 B C respectively. Athens won the leading position from the time of Socrates, who died in 399 B C It is well-known that the early Greek Chronicler, Hecataur, travelled widely in Europe, Asia and Egypt and he was born in 550 B C He gave his countrymen good counsel and succeeded in

obtaining some alleviation of the hard measures adopted by the Persians at the time of the Ionian revolt.

The great resemblance of the mere sequence of things in the progress of civilisation between Grecian and Indian histories is often mistaken as meaning that one was copied from the other, but the historian of man does not find any such thing between the two in the habits, manners and customs of the Hindus. There was no trace of Hatarism or of promiscuous relationship between the sexes. The family and not the tribe was the unit of society. The father or the preceptor was the head of the family or the maker of the spiritual life in the re-birth of a Gotra. The families were not reckoned on the mothers' sides and inheritance did not descend by the female line.

The Chronicle of Kish gives the origin of the famous Saigon I, of Akkad, in the same way as that of Suta Karna, who was held to be the crowned King of Anga by Durjodhana.

"According to the Chronicle of Kish, the next ruler of Sumer and Akkad after Lugal zaggisi was the famous Sargon I. It would appear that he was an adventurer or usurper and that he owed his throne indirectly to Lugal zaggisi, who had dethroned the ruler of Akkad. Later traditions, which have been partly confirmed by contemporary inscriptions, agree that Sargon was of humble birth. In the previous chapter reference was made to the Tammuz like myth attached to his memory. His mother was a vestal virgin dedicated to the sun god, Shamash, and his father an unknown stranger from the mountains—a suggestion of immediate Semitic affinities. Perhaps Saigon owed his rise to power to the assistance received by bands of settlers from the land of the Amorites, which Lugal zaggisi had invaded. According to the legend, Sargon's birth was concealed. He was placed in a vessel which was committed to the river. Brought up by a commoner, he lived in obscurity until the Semitic goddess, Ishtar, gave him her aid. A similar myth was attached in India to the memory of Karna, the Hector of that great Sanskrit Epic the Mahabharata."

The close similarity between the legend of Suta Karna of the Mahabharata, and the story of King Sargon is significant and suggestive of extraneous influence. In the table of contents of the first edition of the Mahabharata Karna's name is not mentioned, and it is likely that the fame of King Saigon having reached India, the story of Sargon was later on foisted upon the Mahabharata in the guise of the mythical Karna. Further, Sargon is a Jewish name and it might have been that Jews were at first inhabitants of India, and subsequently spread to all parts of the world for trade. The Sutas and Sargons might be identical. The Sutas were the chroniclers of the kings and when, by the extirpation of the kings (Kshatriyas) by Parasurama, the occupation of the Sutas in India was gone, they betook themselves for trade to foreign countries and came to be designated Jews, many of whose

* Professor Donald A. Mackenzie's "Myths of Babylonia and Assyria", pages 125-126.

customs and religious practices closely resemble those of the ancient Hindus, e.g., the custom of offering oblations to the departed ancestors, that of observing general mourning and uncleanness for one year after death of parents, that of performing the Holi festival, that of burning a lamp for some days in the room where a death occurs, and so on

Sutas meant bards, who originally lived in Bengal where the Puranas were caste. Professor Pargiter is of the same opinion —

"The Suta mentioned here is not the caste that was described as the offspring of a Kshatriya father and Brahman mother, that was a later application of the term. This Suta was a bard like the Magadha, and the origin of both is placed in the time of a primordial king Prithu, son of Vena. It is explained by a fable which says the first Suta and Magadha came into existence at his sacrifice, and gives a fanciful explanation of the names. What is noteworthy is that the story says Prithu assigned the Anupa (or Suta) country to the Sutas and Magadha to the Magadhas, and this discloses that the Magadhas were really inhabitants of Magadha and the Sutas inhabitants of the Anupa country which appears to mean Bengal here, or of the Suta country the district east of Magadha.* The Sutas had from remote times preserved the genealogies of gods, rishis and kings and traditions and ballads about celebrated men, that is, exactly the material — tales, songs and an intell — out of which the Purana was constructed. Whether or not Vyasa composed the original Purana or superintended its compilation, is immaterial for the present purpose. What is important is that there was abundant tradition of various kinds which could and would naturally have been used in its construction and of the very kinds that went to its construction. The ancient tales were topics of real interest to kings, people and rishis, as both the Epics and the Puranas by their very structure proclaim, and they were also matters to which men of intelligence gave their attention. Allusions in the Veda itself show the same. It would be quite natural that after the religious hymns were formed into the Veda the ancient secular tales and lore should have been collected in a Purana. What the next development of the Purana was is described in the Brahmanda and Vayu and similarly though less fully in the Vishnu. Romaharsana made that Purana Samhita in three versions and taught them to his six disciples, Atreya Sumati Kasyapa Kartavirya Bharatiraja Anuraras Vasistha Mitrayu, Svarni and Samsapavana and made three separate Samhitas which were called by their names. Romaharsana's Samhita and those three were the 'root compositions' (Mulasamhita). They consisted of four divisions (pada) and were to the same effect but differed in their diction. All except Samsapavana's contained 4000 verses. Those versions do not exist now, still some of those persons, besides Romaharsana, appear as inquirers or narrators in some of the Puranas and also in the Mahabharata."†

The Vayu, Brahmanda and Vishnu Puranas say —

"Krishna Draupayana divided the single Veda into four and arranged them, and so was called Vyasa. He entrusted them to his four disciples, one to each, namely Paila Vaisampayana Jaimini and Sumantu. Then with tales, anecdotes, songs and lore that had come down from the ages he compiled a Purana and taught it and the Itihasa to his fifth disciple, the Suta Romaharsana or Lomaharsana."‡

There is a very close connection between the Drama and the Veda,¹ with its religion and worship. Bharata, an old sage, the father of the

* Professor Pargiter's "Ancient Historical Tradition," page 16

† Professor Pargiter's "Ancient Historical Tradition," pages 22-23

‡ Professor Pargiter's "Ancient Historical Tradition," page 21

Ancient Indian Natyacastra, occupies a place in the growth of dramatic theory analogous to that of Panini in Vedic Grammar. Drama was developed in an age of advanced, civilised and cultured society, able to understand the implications of the plays. Epic literature discloses a new form of theme designed to represent the old traditions in vivid pictures of social, moral and spiritual giants, who could represent the ideals of the time against their despised rivals. It is said Brahma first conceived the idea of transferring to earth the celestial instructions of the Vedas in such a way as to be interesting and pleasing entertainment for the general public irrespective of caste, creed or colour, so that the country and the nation as a whole might be educated, benefitted and entrusted with the propagation of a peaceful race and a powerful religion.

Drama was first begun on a special occasion—the victory over the Asuras by the Devas, headed by Indra. Visvakarma, the great architect of heaven, built a stage and the sage Bharata and the divine nymph Urvashi sought the help of the great God Siva, goddess Parvati and their son, Ganesh, patron of literature and remover of obstacles. Siva contributed to it the “Tandava” dance, Parvati the dramatic movements of face and body called Lasya, and Vishnu took the active parts of four dramatic styles, so very essential for the effectiveness of the play. Ganesh was the reviser of Vyasa’s composition of the Bharata Samhita of 8800 verses. This is what is recorded in the table of contents of the Mahabharata.

In Rama’s case, the influence of the Epic on the Drama seems to have been in its full development*. The origin of the Drama and dramatic performance are connected with the Vedic performances and hymns and the victory of the Devas over the Asuras. The essential aim of Bharata’s drama was to secure the worship of the Devas, not by hymns—very difficult and costly affairs—in the sacrifices, but by actual personifications of the great fight between Britta and Indra, when Indra won and seized the banner of Jarpara, a reed of five knots painted white, blue, black, yellow, red and a mixture of hues. The people joining the entertainment paid reverence to Indra’s banner and to the world guardians (Dikpals)†.

The table of contents of the Epic clearly says that the Bharata Samhita begins either with the account of King Uparichara or with the Astik

*Bhababhuti’s Uttaramcharita is well appreciated by Eastern and Western scholars and his debt to the Epic is acknowledged.

†The Mahabharata of Vyasa actually begins with the Indra and Narayana worship by Uparichara Basuhoma and praise to the Dikpalas by Vyasa in the hymn of Sabitri (Vide Annusasana Parva, 150 Chapter).

Parva or with Sambhava Parva. The beginning of King Uparichara is in the Adi Parva, Chapter LXIII, confirmed in the Shanti Parva, Chapter CCCXXXVIII. The Yajñavalkya edition of the Mahabharata is referred to in Shanti Parva, Chapter CCCXIX, which begins with Astik Parva, and the Narayana edition begins with Savyambhuba Manu with the Sambhava Parva, and the Vaisampayan edition begins in the Adi Parva, Chapter LX, which also begins with King Uparichara from Chapter LXIII, Adi Parva.

EPIC HISTORY AND CIVILISATION.

The earliest records of the Indo-Aryans can only be found in the Vedas, but for which very little would have been known of that age, and of the ancient Aryans. This has been admitted by all the learned men of the world. The Rig Veda is held to be the oldest, and the trunk from which all the Vedas grew or were divided.

India was the birthplace of the Vedas and the first home of civilisation and religion. The language in which the Vedas were written and sung was abstruse and terse, if not mystic. It required a full twelve years' training to enable students to understand and read them properly.

The royal sacrifices became useful institutions of vocational training in which students learnt the Vedas. In Vedic sacrifices large numbers of animals were sacrificed and the great sages Vasistha and Kapila were the first protestants who stood against the inhumanity of such sacrifices and sternly set their faces against them. The Bharata Samhita and the Mahabharata were first conceived by the great sages to carry on the Vedic sacrifices, replacing animal sacrifices with great concentration of mind to realise the true essence of the Vedic religion. Sacrifices were soon impressed with the character of educational institutions of great public utility, and were adjuncts to the advancement of civilisation and the material prosperity of the country.

In the long term sacrifices the whole people of a country and adjacent places were entertained with the contents of the Indian Epics, which open with the plans of God's wisdom in creation, His unselfish love and due provisions of mercy to created beings. The ardour of natural affection shines forth in the material world in mother and child. The infant unmask the true spirit of love in the bosom of his family, and in strangers without any fear of interruption or intrusion. The home, where the infant grows, becomes the centre of attraction. India was such a home of the Aryans.

By their great sacrifices they reclaimed forests, extended human habitation over uninhabitable regions by drawing together a large concourse of people to the scene of the sacrifices, by excavating rivers, by draining away filth and refuse either by using them as fuel, or throwing them in the water, or covering them with earth as manure for cultivation, by utilising the large number of cattle in ploughing the fields and drawing water from wells, instead of destroying them in the burning flames.

of the sacrificial fire and, last though not least, the young students, impressed with the majestic sacrifices, learnt with avidity the great recitations of Vedic formulas and ceremonials from the expert performers from day to day

The great advancement of the present age in knowledge makes it possible to discover the growth of civilisation in India from the Vedic sacrifices, their great ministers and the kings who performed them. There is no pleasure so charming and transporting as to catch the first glimpse of the spot where the first great creation of God took place. The scientific nations of the world believe in the deluge of the world, and the Hindus do the same. The succession of time is only a stream leading to Eternity and, what reason leads one to conclude from enquiries, researches and experiments properly conducted, becomes scientific truth

There are evidences of Nature in the domain of research. Nature has made one world and Art another, but they are not at variance. Art is, after all, nothing but the perfection of Nature. The heart is moved equally by Nature and Art. The deductions of reason are indeed gratifying to the intellect in its endeavours to comprehend the manner in which everything was first made and displayed, and the order in which the various objects of creation, *viz.*, ocean, mountain, desert, river, lake, waterfall, or water, earth, wind fire and sky, came into being. There is nothing so charming as the knowledge of literature which makes one realise the infinity and majesty of the author of Nature. Nature is the kindest mother, supplying every creature, insect and plant with what is indispensably necessary for the support of life.

It is not the Vedas but the spirit of God which rescued them from the obscurity of ignorance and saved them from the hands of the Asuras by the revelation of the guardian angel of Nature in the hurling of thunder, burning of wood with wild fire, blowing the peaks of mountains to earth, or bringing out burning lava from the bed of the earth. Art has nothing to do with all these, and science failed to discover many things about them. Nature's voice was reflected in the emotional instinct of man, in the Vedic hymn makers by their meek submission of solemn and sincere love, trying to propitiate the supernatural or superhuman powers

In Epic literature the first attempt was made to decipher the plan and field of the growth of civilisation and its spread. The fall of kings, the rage of nations and the crash of states could not be the theme of such early literature of India. There is a great pleasure in the effort and satisfaction will always increase with its success, with which name, of 'Jaya,' or success, the Epics of India are titled and named

The spiritual history of the great Epic is inter-related with the material progress of India. Sacrifices served the purpose of great educational, agricultural, irrigation and reclamation works—institutions of very great importance for the growth of the country and the nation—through the instrumentality of the ancient sages. This ultimately gave rise to a sort of hagiarchy in India. There are some great examples of human art in the world which have received the name of Wonders of the World. The famous Pyramid, the quarry of Egypt, is one of them. India is the epitome of the world. The Indian Epics describe giants and prodigies of a nation whose deeds can be regarded as Wonders of the World.

Sixty thousand subjects of King Sagar worked like his obedient and devoted children in excavating the sea south of Bengal, and fathered the name of the sea as "Sagara" in Sanskrit, the mother of all languages. The island Sagara at the meeting place of the Ganges and the sea, where the famous sage Kapila released the humble labourers from the toils of earthly life became a sacred shrine. It was this hagiarchy which compelled Sagara's descendant Bhagiratha to undertake very extensive excavation, in spite of the great protests of the royal Vedic sage Jahuhu, only to propitiate the greatest of all sages Kapila by joining the Ganges with the sea near Kapila's hermitage in Bengal to redeem the great work of Sagara's children over a great length of time.

The half-brother Brahmin warrior Parasurama helped very greatly by force of arms and skill to establish this hagiarchy in India. He too, like Bhagirata, had widened and extended the river Brahmaputra. His crusades against the Kshatriyas drove many Kshatriya kings, queens and princes to take refuge on the banks of the Ganges in Bengal. Saptagrama was the famous place of the seven sages near the well-known shrine of Tribeni, where the three rivers Ganges, Jumna and Saraswati meet. Naturally these Kshatriya princes and kings bore a deep resentment against this hagiarchy, and were very reluctant to be subservient to the priestly behests and to performances of Vedic sacrifices. The priestly law givers like Manu, in retaliation, branded them with inferiority and banned Bengal as a place outside Aryavarta. The kings of Bengal fought against the Pandavas and it is said to be a place "shunned by the Pandavas".

The origin of the name of Bengal is said to have been connected with the human art of constructing an embankment wall around it to prevent its being washed away by flood. * Banga was the name of the king of that place and "al" meant a boundary ridge. The formation

of the delta of Bengal was perhaps referred to in the great Epic as the building of so many islands, with which the Epic history of nations is concerned. Ablutions at the sacred estuary of the Ganges and of the Brahmaputra are still considered as greatly sanctifying, and every year large numbers of religious pilgrims go there.

The great Epic describes that King Bali's five sons were the kings of separate divisions of Bali's kingdom, which received their names Anga, Banga, Kalinga, Pundra and Suhma. Bengal from the very early days of the Vedic period reached the highwater-mark of learning, philosophy, religion and good manners. What Dhritarastra was amongst the Kshatriya kings of India, Dirghatama was among the sages, *i.e.*, described as blind. Pradvishi, wife of Dirghatama, instructed her sons to throw her husband, bound head and feet, into the Ganges so that he might float down to Bengal and learn good manners there. Dirghatama was rescued by King Bali* and gave birth to the famous Vedic scholars Kakshivatis from the wombs of the maid-servants of the Queen of Bali.

If Bengal was not a great seat of Vedic learning, if it was not the birthplace of it, even the despised 'Dasiputras' (sons of maid servants), could not have been such great Vedic scholars of the day. Nor is this all. The great Epic begins with the sacrifices of King Uparichar of Magadha in the old province of Bengal, and Nahusa's sacrifice with veiled tirades against animal sacrifice. Kasyapa banished the human sacrificer, Parasurama, from the civilised countries of India and is said to have repatriated the Kshatriya refugees. Ka-yapa's sons are said to be the Nagas, which in all probability does not mean the race of reptiles or snakes, but that of the people called the Nāgas, still living in Chhota Nagpur in the old provinces of Bengal where they migrated.

The life and deeds of Parasurama mark a transitional stage in the history of Aryan religious development. It is rather strange that he is identified with one of the Avatars of Vishnu, but is described in the Ramayana as a follower of Siva, who fought with Rama when he had heard of his breaking of Haradhan (or the bow of Siva) to win his bride Sita at King Janaka's palace. Rama is said to be an incarnation of Narayana and his breaking of Siva's bow symbolised the decadence of the Pasupat cult of worship, and Parasurama's subsequent signal defeat and disgrace at the hands of Rama symbolised the definite triumph and ascendancy of the Narayana cult of worship over the Pasupat cult. This is described in the great Daksha Yajna (sacrifice) in the great Epic.

* The Mahabharata, Adi Parva, Chapter 105.

Kapila typifies the Bengal school of nonconformists and dissenters from the old school of animal sacrifices. Thus the great Epic describes when Kapila protested against the animal sacrifice of King Nihasa. Pious piety and self-sufficiency are sobered down by the acquisition of useful knowledge. Thus the great Epic demonstrates in the fall of Pious Nihasa and Nihasa, and they have been the buoys in the vast ocean of life to warn a people of the dangers. In the protestantism against the old system of sacrifice it is only natural that the remodelling and re-creation occurred in the place of its original birth and growth. Kapila took the initiative and he represented Bengal.

Every intelligent and cultured man has a right to be heard, but when the force of the belief becomes the venom of the heart, it becomes pre-destined. The malignant influence produced by prejudices and the spirit of opposing rank and in exhaustion of the quivers of irony, comes to the point of the contending parties. The Indian Epic, of a later age, does its duty and serve as great light houses of warning to posterity. The institution of Vedic sacrifices, with the march of the times, had passed through various vicissitudes. They assumed gigantic proportions. Knowing that superstition is the religion of habit, the sage of the age and illustrious sage connected everything with a hidden meaning, and the actual of religion, merit or demerit for their own sake, and for the good of the world. The great peculiarity of the Indo-Aryan civilization is that its gradual development and advance has been maintained by the observance and continuance of all works of public utility, which by giving them a religious character and sanction. It was a religion, and the religion of partisans up descended to such a level of bitterness and enmity to round personalities that the dispute had no option left but to leave home and go to the battlefield to decide their quarrel through arm and bill. It was thus that the whole scene of the great Epic became at last converted into the great religion of truth with Sri Krishna at its head.

Resolution takes place with a sudden impulse given to the mind, without allowing knowledge time to ripen into principle. This was the state of India when the great battle of Kurukshetra took place. The field is like a vast ocean in a tempest, where human beings big or small, like ships, drifted away from their anchors of reason and became the sport of circumstance and foundered in the deep bed of the ocean of time. It is indeed the most pitiable sight and illustrates to the world the greatest lesson that passions are the signs of the soul and the children of Nature. To be without them is worse than birds and beasts, and every man should remember that the Omnipotent Father blessed

men and women with reason and conscience to use the passions by keeping them under control

The discovery of the skeleton of a man of mighty stature like that of Bhima Kartaviryarjuna, demon-like Kumbhakarna or Ravana, may give rise to a conclusion that men in ancient times were giants, but it finds very little credence in the present age. Many of the sports and pastimes, food and drink, habit and custom of the ancients might have been responsible for such wonderful growths. The bones show that vultures did not fall upon them or the earth could not decompose them as they were sacred. There are deep meanings to the unusual stories of the birth of the Epic heroes, to their names as well as their pictures as giants of strength and intellect. Bichitravirya was the name of the father of Dhritrashtra, Pandu and Bidura. The name Bichitravirya itself was selected to imply more the marked diversity of his progeny than anything else. It is said that the mother of Dhritrashtra, at the sight of the procreator sage, closed her eyes out of vanity and hatred and so the issue became blind, that Pandu's mother could not bear the effulgence of the Brahmana sage and her issue became frightened and retired and so the issue became yellow complexioned, that the slave girl was all reverence to the sage, so her issue Bidura became Brahmanical.

That Kunti's and Madri's relations with the gods above were fruitful and those with their human husband Pandu were not so, symbolise that the Pandavas were the issues of divine love and not of carnal passion. The picture of carnal love is depicted in the death of Pandu in the arms of Madri, and Madri ascending the funeral pyre of her dead husband not for religious practice, but to satisfy her unsatisfied love and passion in the next world as the great Epic describes. When man or woman creates wants by luxury and passion such deaths stare in the face those who indulge in them. The traditional pictures of social life in the heroic age and nothing else are reflected in these characters.

The civilisation of Ancient India is also reflected in the mythology of the Hindus as well as in their popular and well-known customs and manners. The first incarnation of God Vishnu was the fish, indicating that men in the earliest time lived by eating the most easily procurable food, i.e., fish. The next incarnations of tortoise and boar indicate that with the progress of civilisation men betook themselves to these animal foods, which are seen in plenty in the rivers and jungles of Bengal. Besides, the idea found in the Rig Veda that man's soul goes to the tree and to water is still believed by the

Sonthals of Bengal The rivers of the Punjab or the United Provinces are not like those of Bengal.

The well-known story of the churning of the sea and the rising of the goddess of prosperity, Lakshmi, is very significant The worship of the goddess Lakshmi is connected with the corn-growing of Bengal The Sanskrit word Arya and the incarnation of Vishnu Valaram are connected with the plough ("a") The birth of the great Epic heroine Sita is also connected with it From all these it is evident that the Aryans were agricultural people and it would naturally connect the Aryan habitation to a place on the plains near sea and river with rich fertile soil and abundance of water for irrigation and rain. The deity of prosperity, Lakshmi, is worshipped in every Hindu home periodically every year in Bengal only.

Bengal is famous for feeding one hundred thousand Brahmanas at Vedic Sradh ceremonies, as would appear from the records of the Calcutta High Court, and for spending millions of rupees for the performance of the funeral obsequies of parents. From the days of the most ancient civilisation, the most popular and sacred method of according honour and welcome to a guest has been by offering him water, etc, called *padya* and *arghya*, and that of offering blessing with corn and green grass The origin of this custom would again point to a country which was rich in green verdure all the year round and in a superabundance of water and corn There is no part of India which would answer the description better than Bengal.

The whole of India except the Punjab was known by the name of Gour in Bengal, and the Gour method of literary composition is mentioned in old Sanskrit literature The Gour Brahmanas were engaged in the snake sacrifice of Janmejaya The mythological mountains of Mandar, used as the spindle or the churning staff of the sea, is in old Bengal In trade and commerce as well as in manufacture of celebrated goods which formed the articles of oversea trade with the outside world, Bengal stood foremost From the earliest time Bengal was famous for building boats and sea-going vessels European traders before the days of Alexander's expedition came in their vessels to Satgaon of Bengal It was from Bengal that the first expedition to Ceylon and its conquest by Bijoy Sidha, son of King Singhabahu of Bengal, took place

The Ramayana and the Mahabharata contain interesting relationship between the well-known kings like Dasaratha and Durjodhana as friends and allies Bengal is closely connected with the political, historical and religious history of India

There are good grounds for concluding that Bengal and adjacent parts was the seat of early civilisation in India. Aryalaya, the abode of Vishnu, is the name of Hurrail in the District of Rajshahi. This was the commercial mart where the East India Company had an established factory for the purchase of silk and cotton goods * Saugor Island is the most ancient shrine of Kapila, where the sons of King Sagara were cursed and destroyed and the custom of infanticide continued up to the time of the British occupation † There is a mention of Ravana's falling into a swoon at meeting Kapila Deva in the Ramayana and there is an island of Rahnabad in the District of Backergunge and the Barisal gun is the famous sound whose cause has not as yet been discovered. Ravana was connected with the tradition of the great Siva at Baidyanath and the river Karmanasha ‡ At Sahebgunge, in the District of Purnea, there is a Hindu temple dedicated to the gigantic Hanuman, devotee of Rama Chandra § The king Janaka, the celebrated father of Sita, lived on the Tirhoot Tivahuti, whose dialect is called Maithili and whose kingdom lay by the border or the Nepalese kingdom. The river Gunduck owes its origin to Tibet of Dhawala-giri mountain peak where the Srilgrama Silas are found, which are worshipped by the Hindus. A town in the Tirhoot district is called Pursuramah (Parasu Rama) 90 miles North East of Patna ¶

There is an island Vaman at the confluence of the Ganges and Brahmaputra ** as well as Isle of the Moon (Somadwipa) at the confluence commonly known as Sundeeep Isle †† There is a remarkable hot spring which is also called Seta Kund and the famous Siva ChandraSekhara in Chittagong. It is significant that Kookies are a stout, muscular people with flat nose, broad round face, small eyes, all hunters and warriors with bows, arrows, clubs, spears and dows under whose care Sita was left when Rama and Lakshmana went out in search of the golden stag and Ravana found the convenient opportunity to steal Sita. Sita Coundu at Chittagong is perhaps the spot where she was seized by force and transferred to a ship to carry her to Ceylon. It was by sea Sita was carried, which baffled Rama and Lakshmana to trace the culprit. The savage people felt aggrieved at Ravana's conduct and made common cause against the great tyrant Ravana to

* *I*de Hamilton's 'Geographical, Statistical, and Historical description of Hindoosthan', Volume I, page 199

† *I*bid p 128

‡ *I*bid p 134

§ *I*bid p 238

¶ *I*bid p 273

** *I*bid p 176

†† *I*bid p 175

recover Sita This can be the only cause of Rama's alliance with them and not what the poets' imagination might have blessed the plot with, the cruel murder of Bali. The great warrior Rama must have trained these savages, who were described by the poets as monkeys, etc., to win the battle against so powerful an enemy and did not seek the help of his brothers Bharata and Satrugna and the royal army If Sita was carried by land to trace her destination would not have been difficult

The history of Ceylon lingers in the ancient tradition of Rama and Ravana, and in connection with Prince Wijaya of Jambu Dwipa

"The proper name of this island is Singhal, from which the term Ceylon is probably derived, by the Hindus on the Continent it is named Lanca, and by the Mahomedans Serindib It is also frequently named Taprobane, a name which perhaps originates from Tapoo Ravana, or the island of Ravana a demon- and sovereign in the remote times of Hindu antiquity The strange mythological poem, named the Ramayana, narrates the conquest of Ceylon and destruction of Ravana by Rama, king of Oudh, assisted by an army of gigantic monkeys, which appears to indicate an existing connection between this island and the northern quarters of Hindostan The first meridian of the Hindus passes through the city of Oojein in Malwah, of which we know the position, but as, according to that projection Lanca falls to the west of the present island, the Hindus are of opinion that Ceylon had formerly a much greater extent, and appearances between it and the Maldives tend to justify the belief The name of the river Mahavally Gunga has probably originated from Bali, a hero famous in Hindu romance, from whom the celebrated ruins at Mahavalipuram on the coast of Coromandel are also designated According to Ceylonese tradition, Prince Wijaya, the oldest son of the Emperor Singha Bahu (lion-armed), who reigned over the kingdom of Lala in Jambhu Dwipa (India), having embarked from the city of Singhapur, his father's capital, accompanied by 700 martial adherents, landed in Ceylon on a Tuesday, at the time of full moon, in the month of May, 543 years before the Christian era, and was appointed king of the island by Buddha, who had for that purpose transported himself to it through the air On his arrival he found the country much infested by devils, who it appears rendezvoused in a large forest of Aha trees whence Buddha compelled them to evacuate, and remove to an island named Giridiwa, which he had summoned for their reception from Jambhu Dwipa, and this being accomplished, he remanded the island with its cargo back to its original position Prior to this event Ceylon was destitute of human occupants, Buddha therefore preached to the demigods who had assembled round him, and having established the ordinances of his religion, and rendered Ceylon a fit habitation for human beings, he returned to Jambhu Dwipa In this manner, by the instrumentality of Buddha, and the assistance of the inferior deities Prince Wijaya, descended from the family of the sun, was the first king who reigned over Ceylon, which he continued to do for the period of 8 years "

There is a place called Sittivacca about 30 miles from Colombo full of precious stone mines, which perhaps owes its name to Sita.

"Sittivacca (or Situaque) —A small town in the interior of Ceylon, and formerly noted for being the chief scene of intercourse, both friendly and hostile, between the

*Walter Hamilton's "Geographical, Statistical, and Historical Description of Hindusthan and the Adjacent Countries" Vol 11, pages 502-503

Candiana and their European neighbours. It was then a boundary town, and stands on a large branch of the Malwaddy river, which here makes a great sweep."

Dondra-head and Adam's Bridge are important reminiscences of the Ramayana.

"Mannar (Gulf of)—This gulf separates Ceylon from the Southern Carnatic. Although too shallow to admit vessels of a large size the depth of water is sufficient for sloops, dories and other small craft which convey goods by this passage to and from the continent to Colombo instead of taking the outward circuitous passage, and rounding the island by Dondra head. The ridge of sand banks named Adam's Bridge present a great obstruction and vessels are frequently obliged to lighten at Mannar before they can pass. This is called the inner or Palk's passage, from a Dutchman of that name who first attempted it."

"Dondra head—The southernmost extremity of the island of Ceylon near to which are still to be seen the ruins of what apparently has been a magnificent Hindu temple."

The names of Mathura and Neel-Gunga with the town and the river are important, and the town of that name connected with the exploits of Sri Krishna and the river Gunga connected with the hero of the Mahabharata, like Bali is an important link in the Epic poetic imagination of a later day. That Ravana originally was a native of Tibet can be traced from the name of the lake of his name.

"Ravana's Hrad (or Roodh) Lake—This lake is within a short distance west of Manasarovara, probably not more than ten miles, but being less holy it has not been examined with the same attention. Ravan Hrad, by native travellers, was always represented as surrounding and insulating some large portions of rock, a little detached from the great Hirachi. The name is derived from Ravan a celebrated demon, the antagonist of the demigods and legitimate sovereign of Ceylon, from whence he was expelled by the great Parasu Rama, assisted by the sage counsels of his gigantic prime minister, the monkey Hanuman — (Moorcroft etc, etc,)" §

Undes is the name of a tract of country west of Lake Ravana between Kailas and Himalaya.

"Undes (Urna Desa)—This is the general name of the tract of country situated between the Kailas and Himalaya ridges of mountains west of Lake Ravan's Hrad (or Roodh), and intersected by the course of the Sutlege river, which issuing from that lake flows to the north west" ‡

* Walter Hamilton's "Geographical, Statistical, and Historical Description of Hindusthan and the Adjacent Countries" Vol. II, page 515

† Ibid Vol. II, page 516

‡ Ibid Vol. II, page 521,

§ Ibid Vol. II page 591/92

‡ Ibid. Vol. II, page 593

The worshipping of the deities Durga, Kālī, Ganesha, Kartikeya and visiting shrines like Gaya, Jagarnath, Saugor, Benares, Allahabad, are respected in Tibet

Adultery was not a crime in Tibet. Dancing is a favourite amusement and was performed by people of all ranks and degrees, but there are no professional dancers amongst the Tibetians. The choice of the wife is the exclusive privilege of the elder brother—one female associating with all the brothers of the family without any restriction of age or numbers. With respect to matrimony one male exercises an uncontrolled despotism over many females. A reference is found to be made to Nepal about Bhimasena, the mighty Pandava of the great Epic

"The numerous valleys among the prodigious mountains of which Nepal in its extended sense consists, are inhabited by various tribes, that differ very much in language and considerably in customs. All that have any pretensions to be considered aboriginal, like their neighbours of Bhottan to the east, are by their features clearly marked as belonging to the Tartar or Chinese race of men, and have no sort of resemblance to the Hindus. The time when the Hindus penetrated into these regions is very uncertain. Bhim Sen, the son of Pandoo, is said to have entered them, and probably was the first who introduced any sort of improvement. He still continues to be a favourite object of veneration with the rude tribes, both on the mountains and in their vicinity. Probably at no great distance from the time of that prince, and about the commencement of our era, Sakya, the last great teacher of the Buddhists passed through the country, and settled at Lassa where he is supposed still to animate the mortal portion of the Grand Lama" *

Jara Rakshasi and Kirata, about whom important references are made with the birth and name of Jarasandha and Arjuna's fight, are the aboriginal race names of Nepal

"Kirauts (Kiratas) —East from the territory of Nepal Proper, the mountains are chiefly occupied by a tribe named Kiraut or Kichak, who at a period of remote antiquity appear to have made conquests in the plains of Camroop and Matsya, which now compose the Bengal districts of Rungpur and Dinagepur. These Kirauts are also frequently mentioned in Hindu legend as occupying the country between Nepal and Madra, the ancient denomination in Brahminical writings of the country we call Bhutan †"

Gandhara appears among the countries of India in Sanskrit literature from the Upanishadic period and its inhabitants are, no doubt, Gandharbhas famous for their health, beauty and artistic taste and occupation. The Gandharva kings fought with the Bharata kings and the most notable incident was the mention of a fight between king Chitrangada, son of Santanu and step-brother of Bhisma, and a Gandharva king, who won the battle and killed his adversary. The said king retired perhaps when he heard of the name and fame of Bhisma.

* Walter Hamilton's 'Geographical, Statistical, and Historical Description of Hindustan' page 668, Vol. II

† Ibid. page 712 Vol. II,

It proves the antiquity of the kingdom of the Bhīratas and the Gandhāras beyond the shadow of a doubt.

The princess Gandhārī* was the queen of the blind king Dhritarastra and her piety and charity made her one of the heroines of the Bharata Samhita, and the son of Vedavyasa, Sukra, recited the book to the Gandhāras. There is another significant fact that the happy valley of Kashmir is full of ancient remains of many huge buildings, parts of palaces and temples ascribed to the Pandavas. They are the standing memories of the great heroes who were accepted as incarnations of the attributes of virtue and God, and these real personalities cannot be brushed aside as mythological beings as has usually been done.

The seven sages belonging to a cycle of time called Manvantara are not fixed chronologically in the two Epics, and the Puranas and the genealogies given in them, and the names of descendants of sages and kings hardly reconcile with one another. The Manvantaras, or the cycles of time with which the early history of India is mysteriously wound up, and the great ages are so confusing that no useful purpose will be served by vainly trying to fix them in their definite and proper chronological sequence. Allegory and mythology also play a large part in the Epics, and the Puranas. The extravagance of Indian mythology and the fanciful popular etymologies and allegories, constitute a great impediment to the resuscitation of clear chronological data and the relative importance and bearing of facts embedded in the endless stories of the Epics and Puranas.

Close study of the two Epics and Puranas will enable any reasonable student to arrive at the conclusion that the division of history into four Yugas is a mere fiction, invented to obscure their inter-relation. In the circumstances, the only course left open to find out the truth is to follow the reasonable method of fixing it from discourses between persons, with which the Mahabharata is full, and well-known incidents recited in the Epics and the Puranas, rather than to follow the incorrect genealogical tables or the Gotra schemes, some of which appear to be fanciful. The Bharata Samhita had its school of philosophy and morals. The many different editions of the Mahabharata which were grafted on the original theme, viz., the Bharata Samhita, have their origin in a different school of philosophy with its distinctive outlook on morality, religion and theology.

Hence the different strata of the Mahabharata have been loosely superimposed one upon another. The philosophical schools on which

* The Gandhāris are mentioned in Rig and Atharva Vedas, and Gandhara country is known in Ancient Sanskrit Literature and Behistan inscription of Darius. Herodotus

the Bhārata Samhita and the versions of the Mahabharata were based cannot properly be understood if the structural strata of the present Epic are not properly investigated and shown in their clear outline. The task is admittedly a most difficult and tedious one, but the clue to the solution of this problem is in the ten days sacrifice of the Aswamedha and the horse sacrifice. The stories which were told at the time of the Aswamedha sacrifice have all been incorporated into the text of the Mahabharata. The compilers of the present Epic must have framed a connected narrative out of the whole mass of legends and myths that had grown round the controversies which centred round the performance of the sacrifice. But although however skilful might have been the work of the various redactors of the Mahabharata, it was not possible for any one man or group of men to add coherence to the Epic structures, which account for so much looseness of theme.

Nothing revealed the real date of the current Ramayana more than the performance of sacrifice under the Atharva Veda by King Dasaratha to get children through the help of Rishyasringa, though his own veteran priest Vasistha was there, as well as the condemnation by Rama of the practice of Yoga by a Sudra, who lowered his head from a tree over a freer penance to acquire merit. It speaks of the worst type of Brahmanical hierarchy which was not consistent with the real age of the Ramayana, far less of Treta Yuga.

The caste-system in India did not exist in the early Vedic period or at the end of the age of Dvapara, when the Bharata of the Mahabharata were composed one after the other. It reminds one of the account of Fa Hien, the Chinese traveller, bearing emphatic testimony to the degradation of the Chandals in the Gupta age. Valmiki was a sage of the time of the Upanishads and Aranyakas, when seers deemed marriage indispensable and the Bhadharanyaka gives the spell to obtain a male son. The saintly Svetaketu, who fixed one husband for a woman is an authority on the Kamasutra.

"Caste ought to be carefully distinguished from school, karanā—from race and family, Gotra and kula. This subject is beset with many difficulties, and I do not myself profess to see quite clearly on the many intricate questions connected with it. With regard to the early history of races and families there is a rich literature in Sanskrit. You will find in the Vedic Grihya sutras a list of Brahmanic Gotras* and, strange to say, you will see that the interdiction against marriages between members of the same Gotra, is by no means so universal as it is supposed to be. Some of the statements set forth in these Brahmanic treatises may seem to represent *puraṇa* rather than real facts, but we must not forget that even such theories have often very powerfully influenced the later development of social life in India."

"If there is anything like totemism in India, let us have a full and detailed description of each individual case, instead of hiding all that may be really

* *See my History of Ancient Sanskrit Literature, pages 379—388*

enlightening under the large bushel of totemism. Almost anything that outwardly distinguishes one race from another is now called totem though what seems to be the same, and even what answers the same purpose, is by no means always the same in its origin. This habit of generalising and exaggerating has done infinite mischief. The North-American Indians have their totems, wrongly so spelt, and we know what they mean by these symbols. We find similar family symbols in many parts of the world but to call them all totems is most inaccurate. And what is the result? Because in some parts of the world marriages between members of the same totem are forbidden, statements that in Australia members of the same totem are encouraged to marry are received with incredulity. Because certain races abstain from eating animals which form their totems, we are told that the pig was in ancient times have been the totem of the Jews. *Si duo faciunt idem, non est idem*. Think only of the different Nagas or snakes in India. People are called Nagas they worship Nagas they use emblems of Nagas and we may believe that they do not eat Nagas. Is the Naga or serpent therefore to be simply classed as a totem? *There are facets et facets*, and anyone who has lived in India knows that in India, as elsewhere, nothing has such various antecedents, and nothing serves such different purposes as Naga the serpent.

His article on the earliest Aryan civilisation contains very interesting information.

In Sanskrit it is true, 'A R' root is not used with the meaning of ploughing. In that sense the South Eastern Aryans used *Kṛsh*, to draw lines or furrows, which is never used in that sense in the North Western branch. The root 'A R' may, however have left some very old derivatives there also *ar*, in *arida*, and *ara* earth, *Gk*, *epa* in *epos*, and in *urvara*, field, *f r a r* *vara* *apovpa*. In Zend *urvara* means what is grown the produce of the field rather than the field itself. If therefore Dr Hahn admits a half-nomadic agriculture among the early Aryas, he will find this is all that we contended for ourselves.

"And what applies to the oldest art, the art *par excellence*, the art of ploughing, applies naturally to all the other arts which we ascribe to the Ancient Aryas, such as plaiting sewing spinning weaving and all the rest. They must all be conceived as most simple and primitive and it would be difficult in many cases to say where plaiting ends and weaving begins. All this I thought was understood and it seems to me really as if our critics often called up a ghost in order to lay it. I consider it, therefore as a well established principle that any word which occurs in Sanskrit or Zend, and at the same time in any one of the North Western languages, may be used as a fossil belonging to a stratum previous to the Aryan Separation. If we find *ar* in Sanskrit and *ensis* in Latin, we may safely place that name in the list of the oldest Aryan weapons. If we find *sa sa* for hare in Sanskrit, and *haso* for hare in OIG, we need not hesitate to claim for the United Aryas an acquaintance with that animal. I claim a right to treat Varuna as a common Aryan God, though of the other branches of the Aryan family Greece alone has preserved his memory in *Orpavo*. But if the ancestors of Greeks and Hindus worshipped Varuna, that is enough to stamp him as an Aryan God, known before the Greeks crossed the Bosphorus or the Hindus set eyes on the Seven Rivers."

It cannot be expected that his conclusions will be right throughout. He has admitted that "Zend and Sanskrit may be treated as twins

* Professor Max-Müller's Collected Works (Biographica of words and the Home of Aryas) page 250—251

† Professor Max Müller's, Collected Works (Biographica of words and the Home of Aryas) page 248

and that each has a character of its own" Sanskrit has many words which it shares with Greek, Latin, Teutonic, Slavonic and Celtic and of which no trace exists in Zend. But he could not make out truly what was the reason of the change of meaning of the words Deva in Sanskrit and Deeva in Zend, for the Sanskrit word means bright and god whereas the almost same word in Zend means just the opposite, an evil demon. He is not certain of his own views as he says—

"I am quite willing to accept it as the result of a natural religious development if that can be proved" His own impression is 'that such a change of meaning accompanied as it is by similar changes in the character of certain Vedic gods, such as the Nasatyas and Indra, who have become evil spirits in the Avesta (Naonhaitya Indra or Andra), points to a religious schism

This impression is not in terms of his conclusion just before it, *viz*,

'No two Aryan languages are so closely united as Sanskrit and Zend, and they also teach us that the vocabulary of the two languages together marks a decided historical progress on the part of the South Eastern as compared with the North Western branch. It proves beyond the shadow of a doubt that the Devas and the Asuras, the two branches of Kasyapa, lived in India and fought and separated, the Veda belonged to the Devas and Avesta to the Asuras and there must needs be a change of meaning in the book of the Devas generally and their king Indra"

This is further borne out by the learned professor's conclusion:

"What is important for our purposes is that such names as Indra, Nasatya, Apam Napat, Aramati, Gandharva, Druh, Yama, etc., are utterly unknown to the other Aryas. Sanskrit has many words which it shares with Greek, Latin, Teutonic, Slavonic and Celtic and of which no trace exists in Zend. The closeness of relationship of the whole Aryan family is, of course best shown by its different members, sharing in common a grammatical articulation. One single grammatical form opens vistas which far transcend our ordinary chronology. Even a single particle, such as *ra*, and, in Sanskrit, *ka* in Zend, *re* in Greek, *que* in Latin, *in* Gothic, *ch* in Celtic all placed after the word, shows a continuity of growth and opens strata of thought which lie deeper than the deepest strata of our globe. A look at the numerals from one to ten tells us more of forgotten intellectual labour than all the pyramids of Egypt and the palaces of Babylon. But while we admire these remnants of common Aryan work, we may also learn some lessons though referring to a later period, from differences which divide the two great branches of the Aryan family"

All these prove ancient trade relations and Aryan expansion of knowledge and literature. For instance, the equivalent word for *even* is almost one, Sanskrit Dhana, Zend Dana, Slav Latin Duna (bread). Likewise Sanskrit Ayas, Zend Ayauh, Latin Aes, Teut Aia and Sanskrit Ragata, Zend Ereyata, Arm artsath, Celt Argat, Latin Argentum, Sans Tula, Latin Tula, a name for balancing weight. Sanskrit Madhu, Zend Madhu, Greek Mead, Teut Metu, Slav. Medu, Latin Medus, Celt Mid

Sanskrit	Zend	Latin	Teut	Slav	Celt
Pasu	Pasu	Pecus	Brother	Peku	Brathir
Go	Gao			Cow	
Bhratar	Bratr			Bratru	